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Photo by Peter Flood

Birds of Pond Mountain Game Land

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Pond Mountain was, until recently, infrequently visited by birders in a county once described as an "ornithologically under-studied" section of the state (LeGrand and Potter 1979). Topping out at 4980 feet (1517 meters) in elevation in the very northwest corner of North Carolina, Pond Mountain has a mix of forest and open areas. Unique features, like natural ponds and rock outcrops, attract a diverse bird community. Following a lengthy lull, documentation of the bird community increased rapidly when the property was transferred from its former landowner, New River Tree Company, through the Blue Ridge Conservancy, to North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (hereafter, the Commission) (Our State 2012). The acquisition process triggered wildlife inventories of the parcels. Most bird surveys were conducted on Pond Mountain proper with additional surveys conducted on recently acquired parcels south to Cut Laurel Gap. We kept a list of all bird species encountered during early visits to the game land (2008 to 2013) and then established permanent breeding bird monitoring points across it. Since 2014 we conducted annual surveys of these points between late May and mid-June. In 2017 we visited the game land monthly and led public bird walks, culminating in publication of a four-season bird checklist with 123 species.

Location of Pond Mountain Game Lands in northwestern North Carolina

Historically, Pond Mountain was heavily forested with northern hardwoods, high elevation Red Oak, and rich cove forest (Oakley 1999). It was logged for timber, bark extract, and to support iron mining over a span of approximately ten years ending by 1918 when the railroad was abandoned (T. Blevins, pers. comm.). The mountain was burned extensively to remove logging slash, then seeded and converted to grazing land

for sheep, cattle, and horses. Christmas tree production began in 1982. In 1979, LeGrand and Potter described the mountain as having "extensive pastures at its summit". For the 20 years before acquisition by the state, New River Tree Company managed 297 ha of the property in Christmas tree production (Fraser Fir) with the remainder forested. As Christmas tree production was gradually phased out between 2008 and 2016, the mountain transitioned to a mix of fallow fields and forest. Between 2013 and 2015, this transition accelerated when the company culled most of the remaining fir trees. Trees were cut and left at the stump or piled. The Commission began to manage the game land per the Pond Mountain Game Land Management Plan using prescribed fire, mowing, herbicide, and forestry practices (NCWRC 2015). Open areas are managed as 1/3 grassland, 1/3 shrub-scrub, and 1/3 young forest (e.g., seedlings, saplings) with the remaining acreage in mature forest. The diverse mosaic of habitats that is emerging is home to several priority species listed in the N.C. Wildlife Action Plan (NCWRC 2015). With changing habitats comes a changing bird community.

Here we provide a new baseline of the bird community as Pond Mountain transitions from Christmas tree production into this next phase. We highlight (1) priority species listed in the N.C. Wildlife Action Plan, (2) upland game birds, (3) winter raptors, and (4) birds of seven habitats found on the game land. Differences in survey area and survey time between our effort and the 1979 breeding bird foray are extensive, and the point of this summary is to provide a current baseline, not to make a direct comparison. However, we note that with the addition of our surveys in the nonbreeding season and of multiple years of visitation to the property, we found a total of 123 species, 44 of which were not documented in the 1979 Ashe County breeding season survey. Thirteen of the 44 are possible or confirmed breeders and 31 are passage migrants or wintering birds. We missed 18 species documented in Ashe County in 1979, although only one, Horned Lark (*Eremophila alpestris*), was explicitly noted on Pond Mountain in the 1979 survey. Our four-season bird checklist and map for Pond Mountain Game Land are available as a downloadable PDF from https://www.ncwildlife.org/Outdoor-Activities/Bird-Watching.

Priority and listed species

We found 19 species listed in the N.C. Wildlife Action Plan as Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN), 21 as Knowledge Gap, and 14 as Management Priority (Table 1) (NCWRC 2015). Six species found are listed by the N.C. State Legislature (NCWRC 2019; 15A NCAC 10I .0103 - 0105). These included the NC Threatened Northern Saw-whet Owl (*Aegolius acadicus*) and Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), and the NC Special Concern Red Crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra*), Vesper Sparrow (*Pooecetes gramineus*), and Golden-winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*). The Bald Eagle and Red Crossbill were both flyovers with the nearest suitable breeding habitat at Watauga Lake, Tennessee, and Whitetop Mountain, Virginia, respectively. A fourth Special Concern species, Brown Creeper (*Certhia americana*), sang from a mature White Pine plantation one third of a mile from the game land boundary on Flatwoods School Road across from Cut Laurel Gap Road on June 8, 2018.

Upland game birds

The Ruffed Grouse (*Bonasa umbellus*) was uncommon in the higher elevations. We rarely flushed American Woodcock (*Scolopax minor*) from the former runway and wet grassy paths between Christmas tree plots, and along forest edges at elevations from 4300 to 4800 feet (1310 – 1463 m) in June and September, and Northern Bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*) from the Christmas trees at 4800 feet (1463 m) in June. Nearly four decades after reintroduction efforts, the Eastern Wild Turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*) was common on the game land during our surveys.

Winter raptors

Winter surveys added interesting species of raptors more typical of the Grayson Highlands or Burke's Garden, Virginia. Northern Harriers (*Circus hudsonius*), Rough-legged Hawk (*Buteo lagopus*), and Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*) observations were all confined to the upper fields. Northern Harriers were observed hunting in September, October, and November. A Short-eared Owl flushed from the field on November 15, 2017, was a new county record and the only record of this species in the northern mountains. Rough-legged Hawks have been reported at Pond Mountain four times, most recently on November 15, 2017 and February 24, 2018 (G. McGrane) soaring over the upper fields. Unlike the other raptors observed during birding excursions, Golden Eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*) were documented via a baited camera trap deployed at Pond Mountain in winter 2015 (Kelly and Tomcho 2017).

Christmas tree plots

During Christmas tree production, the Dark-eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis*) was the most common species among the firs. Vesper Sparrows were seen frequently in the firs, using rocks and the young fir trees as song perches and the dirt lanes between the plots for dust bathing. In 1979, LeGrand and Potter tallied 25 Vesper Sparrows on Pond Mountain. Unfortunately, we did not have a recent census of Vesper Sparrows until after Christmas trees had been culled.

Fallow fields (former Christmas tree plots)

Vegetation structure changed when the fir crop was harvested or culled. Initially, the culled firs were left at the stump or piled. Immediately following harvest or culling, Song Sparrows (*Melospiza melodia*) and Eastern Towhees (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*) became the most common species in these areas, conspicuously perching on piles of culled firs to sing. Field Sparrows (*Spizella pusilla*) were also found in the fallow fields. Brown Thrashers (*Toxostoma rufum*) were found regularly above 4600 feet (1402 m) during Christmas tree production and in thick vegetation encasing felled trees. Commission staff from the Wilkes Wildlife Depot progressively plowed and groomed the fields, removing rocks and stumps and burning cut fir trees. Following this management, Vesper Sparrows were less frequently observed and became primarily confined to hills and ridges with short, grass-dominated vegetation. They used fence posts, debris piles, remaining rocks, or trees on the forest edge as song perches. Fledglings were seen annually in June along the dirt game land roads. On May 31, 2017, we documented a Vesper Sparrow nest containing one egg at 4930 feet (1502 m) in the upper field which had been plowed and

burned earlier in the spring. A single Savannah Sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis*) was seen on this hill on June 4, 2017. Grasshopper Sparrows (*Ammodramus savannarum*) were found (May 31, 2017 and June 6, 2018) at 4900 feet (1493 m) in taller grasses south of the hanger.

Fallow fields that had matured into a mix of grasses, forbs, blackberries (*Rubus* sp.), patchy shrubs, and scattered trees were dominated by Chestnut-sided Warblers (*Setophaga pensylvanica*) and Field Sparrows. On June 6, 2018, we documented the game land's first Golden-winged Warbler at 4374 feet (1332 m) in a field that was seven years fallow, and the first "Brewster's Warbler" (hybrid between Golden-winged and Blue-winged Warblers (*Vermivora cyanoptera*)) on the ridge to the south at 4500 feet (1371 m) in a field that was 10 years fallow. We also documented Black-billed Cuckoos (*Coccyzus erythropthalmus*) for the first time on June 7 and 18, 2018. In 2019, we tallied seven Black-billed Cuckoos in wet, shrubby thickets between 4130 and 4530 feet (1258 – 1380 m) that had been fallow for 10 years.

Forests

Warbler species associated with forest cover were uncommon to rare and restricted to the forested slopes at mid-elevation and forested ravines. These included Ovenbird (*Seiurus aurocapilla*), Hooded Warbler (*Setophaga citrina*), American Redstart (*Setophaga ruticilla*), Northern Parula (*Setophaga americana*), Blackburnian Warbler (*Setophaga fusca*), Black-throated Blue Warbler (*Setophaga caerulescens*), Black-throated Green Warbler (*Setophaga virens*), and Canada Warbler (*Cardellina canadensis*). Likewise, Wood Thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*), Scarlet Tanager (*Piranga olivacea*), and Eastern Wood-Pewee (*Contopus virens*) were only found in similar wooded situations.

Black-throated Blue Warbler by Mary Parker Sonis

Notable species found in the forest included regular occurrences in mid-June of Hermit Thrush (*Catharus guttatus*) and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus varius*), both listed as SGCN. Sapsuckers were detected in spring, summer, and fall along edges of hawthorn, American Beech, and other northern hardwood trees at 4600 to 4910 feet (1402 – 1496 m) and in two Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum*) stands at 3800 feet (1158 m). Hermit Thrushes were detected in spring and

summer in northern hardwoods at 4155 to 4855 feet (1266 – 1479 m) on Pond Mountain proper and south to Cut Laurel Gap. Unlike Veeries (*Catharus fuscescens*), which were found in northern hardwood stands having thicker understories, Hermit Thrushes were associated with more open understories dominated by ferns and mosses. A single Northern Saw-whet Owl responded to call playback on May 31, 2017 at 4772 feet (1454 m) in northern hardwood forest with an understory of rich herbaceous cover, rocks, and moss. All other nocturnal owl surveys produced only Barred Owls (*Strix varia*) in high elevation Red Oak, Montane Oak, and northern hardwood forests and one Great-horned Owl (*Bubo virginianus*), the 123rd species for the game land.

Ponds and wetlands

Alder Flycatchers (*Empidonax alnorum*) were found during most years near a pond adjacent to a shrubby, wet opening at 4750 feet (1447 m). On June 19, 2018, two were calling at this site. Two male Wood Ducks (*Aix sponsa*) were observed at a pond at 4450 feet (1356 m) on June 15, 2011. In June, Red-winged Blackbirds (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) frequented ponds with cattail (*Typha* spp.) borders, some as high as 4685 feet (1427 m).

Forested riparian zones

Alder Flycatchers and Winter Wrens (*Troglodytes hiemalis*) were regularly detected in forested riparian zones along headwater streams feeding Big Horse Creek near the Virginia border at 4200 feet (1280 m) in early June. An Acadian Flycatcher (*Empidonax virescens*) was found at 3700 feet (1127 m) along Gentry Creek near Cut Laurel Gap.

Rock outcrops

A pair of Common Ravens (*Corvus corax*) nested on a rock outcrop at 4586 feet (1397 m) in 2015, 2016, 2018, 2019, and possibly 2017. Two fledglings, identified by their pink gapes and gray irises, foraged in grass above the rock outcrop on June 6, 2018. Due to infrequent trips to this rock outcrop we can only narrow down the breeding window to between March 1, 2016 and June 1, 2016, during which time the nest changed from unlined and unused to lined with deer hair and moss and the surrounding rock face was splashed with bird droppings. Between 2009 and 2014 we did not observe ravens on the game land.

Edges

Edge habitat is abundant on Pond Mountain Game Land, now as forest and fallow field, formerly as forest and Christmas tree plots. Some species associated with these edges were Least Flycatcher (*Empidonax minimus*), Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Gray Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*), and Indigo Bunting (*Passerina cyanea*). On June 18, 2018, we found a Cedar Waxwing (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) nest in woods on the edge of a shrubby, wet opening.

Table 1. North Carolina state-listed species, Species of Greatest Conservation Need, Knowledge Gap, and Management Priority bird species observed at Pond Mountain Game Land since 2008[1].

Species of Greatest Conservation Need	**Knowledge Gap**	**Management Priority**
Acadian Flycatcher	American Pipit	American Woodcock
Alder Flycatcher	American Woodcock	Bald Eagle [T,2]
American Kestrel	Bay-breasted Warbler	Canada Goose
Bald Eagle[T,2]	Black-billed Cuckoo	Great Blue Heron
Blackburnian Warbler	Brown Creeper[SC]	Mourning Dove
Common Raven	Cape May Warbler	Northern Bobwhite
Golden-winged Warbler[SC]	Cooper's Hawk	Pine Siskin
Hermit Thrush	Golden-crowned Kinglet	Red Crossbill[SC,2]
Lincoln's Sparrow	Golden Eagle	Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Nashville Warbler	Least Flycatcher	Ruffed Grouse
Northern Bobwhite	Philadelphia Vireo	Wilson Snipe
Northern Harrier	Pine Siskin	Wild Turkey
Northern Saw-whet Owl[T]	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Wood Duck
Red Crossbill[SC,2]	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
Ruffed Grouse	Short-eared Owl	
Rusty Blackbird	Swainson's Thrush	
Savannah Sparrow	Tennessee Warbler	
Veery	Tree Swallow	
Vesper Sparrow[SC]	Winter Wren	
	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	
	Yellow-rumped Warbler	

[T] NC Threatened, [SC] NC Special Concern, [1] residency status can be found in the checklist, [2] flyover

Acknowledgments

The bird surveys conducted in 2017 to create a four-season checklist for Pond Mountain Game Land were greatly supported by volunteers from the High Country Audubon Society. Special thanks to Guy McGrane, Doris Ratchford, Jim Ratchford, Martha Cutler, Debbie Shetterly, and Doug Blackford for their in-depth survey efforts. Thanks to Jan Hayes for her illustration that is featured on the 4-season checklist, to Tom Blevins for historical information, to Mark and Diane Johnston, and to the Wilkes Wildlife Crew. This study was initiated and coordinated by the Commission, and funding was provided by Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration and the North Carolina Non-Game and Endangered Species fund.

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Northernmost Nesting Record for Wood Stork (*Mycteria americana*) from North Carolina

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On the morning of 15 May 2019, while conducting aerial photography of a private conservation area using an unmanned aerial vehicle (DJI Phantom 4 Pro), I happened upon a wading bird rookery (Figure 1) on an adjacent property owned by the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. The rookery was in a single large Bald Cypress (*Taxodium distichum*) tree, in an open canopy swamp, at 34°45'10.7"N, 77°54'27.7"W along the Northeast Cape Fear River near the town of Wallace, in Duplin County, NC. Photographs were taken from a safe distance, and no disturbance to the birds was observed.

Based on rough estimates from my aerial photographs, the tree contained: Great Egret (*Ardea alba*, 52 active nests and 100 individuals), Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*, 15 active nests and 25 individuals), and Anhinga (*Anhinga anhinga*, 2 active nests and 3 individuals). Adults, fledglings, and nestlings of Great Egrets and Great Blue Heron were discernible.

The tree also contained at least two active Wood Stork (*Mycteria americana*) nests and three individuals. A flock of six Wood Storks was photographed earlier on the same morning approximately 2km N-NE of the rookery flying north along the river, indicating additional individuals were in the area that may use the site for nesting or roosting. The site was reported to NC Wildlife Resources Commission staff who inspected it later that same month and confirmed nesting of the above reported species (Carmen Johnson, NCWRC, pers.com.)

Wading bird rookeries are tracked by the NC Natural Heritage Program as Important Animal Assemblages and the Wood Stork is listed as a Threatened species under both the State and Federal Endangered Species Acts (Ratcliffe, 2018). The Wood Stork population in the United States expanded its range northward into southeastern North Carolina in the early 2000s and the first nesting record was reported in 2005 (Schweitzer, 2018).

As of May 2019, the NC Natural Heritage Program Database contained only six records for Wood Stork roosting or nesting locations, with the nearest record occurring 34km southwest in Sampson County along the Black River near the town of Ivanhoe. The record reported here represents the first nesting site reported for Duplin County and the northernmost nesting record in North Carolina (Carmen Johnson, NCWRC, pers.com.), making this the northernmost record within the species' range.

Fortunately, for conservation purposes, the site is located on a property protected under a conservation easement held by The Clean Water Management Trust Fund and

lies adjacent to the Angola Game Lands (owned by NC Wildlife Resources Commission) and to two private conservation easement properties held by North American Land Trust.

Figure 1. Great Egret, Great Blue Heron, Anhinga, and Wood Stork rookery photographed by unmanned aerial vehicle on May 15, 2019.

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A Tahiti Petrel (*Pseudobulweria rostrata*) off Hatteras, North Carolina USA

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The Tahiti Petrel (*Pseudobulwaria rostrata*) occupies warm waters of the tropical Pacific Ocean and (although listed as IUCN Near Threatened) is the most numerous of the extant *Pseudobulweria* species (Brooke 2004, BirdLife International 2019). The genus *Pseudobulweria* is the most endangered genus of seabirds and includes three critically endangered species — Fiji Petrel (*Ps. macgillivrayi)*, Beck's Petrel (*Ps. becki*) and Mascarene Petrel (*Ps. aterrima)* (Rauzon, M.J. & Rudd, A.B. 2014). Tahiti Petrel breeds in the southwest and central Pacific and ranges from as far west as Taiwan east to waters off Middle America, and is often found in waters exceeding 25° C (Brooke 2004, Howell 2012).

Field observation

On 29 May 2018 the authors and spotter Ed Corey along with 15 pelagic participants headed out from Hatteras, NC, on a pelagic trip run by Brian Patteson, Inc. aboard the *Stormy Petrel II*. Our destination was the continental shelf edge, deeper waters beyond the shelf edge and (when reachable) the variable western edge of the Gulf Stream approximately 25-35+ miles ESE of Hatteras Inlet.

As we jogged out past the shelf break on 29 May, it became clear that conditions had changed from the previous couple of days. The wide band of blended greenish water was gone, and we found bright blue Gulf Stream water pushing 80° F (27° C) just 27 miles offshore under mostly overcast conditions.

Around 11:40 EDT in the vicinity of 34° 55.06' N, 75° 11.47' W, sea surface temperature (SST) 26.89° C, Peter Flood observed a distant petrel flying up the chum slick toward the boat from astern. The bird possessed a dark hooded-like appearance, white belly, darkish underwings, and darkish under-tail coverts. From a distance, initial thoughts on the identification of this petrel leaned towards a light morph Trindade Petrel (*Pterodroma arminjonina*) as the plumage aspect between the two species is superficially similar – particularly at a distance. However, as the petrel came in closer, we realized it was something different. It was a bit too large for Trindade Petrel, appearing as large and longer winged than two nearby Black-capped Petrels (*Pterodroma hasitata*), and the underwings were quite dark.

Tahiti Petrel, dorsal view. Offshore from Hatteras, NC 29 May 2018. Photo by Carol Hare

Our next thought was Atlantic Petrel (*Pterodroma incerta*), but it didn't look right for that species either. The petrel continued flying up the chum slick with relatively smooth, languid wing beats and at times sailed around with its wings held out straight, not looking right for a *Pterodroma*. A few of us onboard were able to snap some photos before the petrel glided away and upon review, its identification as Tahiti Petrel became apparent. It was a species we had not seen before in life, but were familiar with based on pictures and video. However, it was in the wrong ocean, so it was not on our radar initially.

We feel confident in ruling out Beck's Petrel as a candidate given the direct comparison and relative size of our petrel with nearby Black-capped Petrels. Brooke describes Beck's Petrel as a "miniature" Tahiti Petrel with wing and tail measurements being 15% smaller and other measurements as much as 25% smaller (Brooke 2004). Upon careful assessment of our photos, literature review and much discussion, we settled on Tahiti Petrel as the correct identification.

Tahiti Petrel, showing underparts. Offshore from Hatteras, NC 29 May 2018. Photo by Peter Flood

Molt as an identification key

The timing of molt in birds may be helpful in establishing age and possibly separating species (Howell 2010). Moreover, Howell (2012) noted wing molt in Tahiti Petrels in the Pacific region occurring March-October.

Tahiti Petrels breed throughout the year with apparent peaks that differ between localities. (Villard *et al.* 2006). This suggests a Tahiti Petrel may be in wing molt at any time of year. Observations of our Tahiti Petrel indicate that it was in approximate mid-primary molt at the time of our sighting. Unfortunately, with year-round breeding populations, there is little we can conclude about the age or origins of our petrel based on the observed molt timing.

Provenance of our petrel

While this individual's pathway to the North Atlantic will never be known, it is interesting to consider the possibilities. Given the current portions of its range off Middle America, it is not unreasonable to imagine a Tahiti Petrel being swept up ahead of a tropical weather system, carried over the narrow landmass of Central America, and deposited into the western Caribbean Sea. From there, it seems plausible that one could find its way to the warm Gulf Stream waters off the southeastern United States.

Alternatively, our bird may have approached North America from the east. Lambert (2004) noted what were most likely Tahiti Petrels approximately 45-110 km off the coast of southern Mozambique, in the southwest Indian Ocean, on five separate occasions during November 1987 and December 1990. More recently, and quite intriguing, was an apparent Tahiti Petrel that was photographed during a pelagic trip on 11 November 2018 off Durban, South Africa, in the southwest Indian Ocean (Allan and Perrins 2019).Is it possible that a Tahiti Petrel may have followed some warm water around the southern tip of South Africa and worked its way into the North Atlantic?

Although a few records of Tahiti Petrel have been documented in Hawaii, as far as we are aware, this is the first occurrence and photographic documentation of a Tahiti Petrel in the North Atlantic and perhaps the first sighting anywhere in the Atlantic Ocean.

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BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

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(All dates Fall 2019, unless otherwise noted)

Briefs for the Files is a seasonal collection of uncommon-to-rare or unusual North and South Carolina bird sightings and events which do not necessarily require a more detailed Field Note or article. Reports of your sightings are due the 20th of the month after the end of the previous season.

Winter	*December 1–February 28*	*due March 20*
Spring	*March 1–May 31*	*due June 20*
Summer	*June 1–July 31*	*due August 20*
Fall	*August 1–November 30*	*due December 20*

Reports may be submitted in any format, but I prefer that you use email, list multiple sightings in taxonomic order (rather than by date or location), and type your report directly into the body of the email. If your sightings are in a file, please copy-and-paste the text into the body of the email, rather than sending an attachment.

Suitable reports for the Briefs include any sightings you feel are unusual, rare, noteworthy, or just plain interesting to you in any way! It is my responsibility to decide which reports merit inclusion in the Briefs.

Please be sure to include details of any rare or hard-to-identify birds.

I rely in part on sightings reported in Carolinabirds. Please don't, however, rely on me to pick up your sightings from Carolinabirds. Instead, please also send your sightings directly to me as described above.

If I feel that your sighting warrants a Field Note, I will contact either you or the appropriate state Field Notes editor. You may, of course, submit your Field Note directly to the editor without going through me.

Abbreviations: **BRC** – Bird Records Committee, **et al.** – and others, **Ft** – Fort, **Ln** – Lane, **m. obs.** – multiple observers, **NC** – North Carolina, **NWR** – National Wildlife Refuge, **Rd** – Road, **SC** – South Carolina, **SP** – State Park, **WMA** – Wildlife Management Area, **WTP** – Water Treatment Plant

All italicized place names are counties.

Snow Goose: 15 photographed in flight over the Lake Landing area of Mattamuskeet NWR *Hyde* NC 19 Oct (Susan Campbell, et al.) were somewhat early. A dark-morph individual that summered with Canada Geese on Lake Lure *Rutherford* NC remained until 8 Oct (Ryan Lubbers).

Ross's Goose: 23 in the fields near exit 548 on US-64 in *Washington* NC 22 Nov (Andrew Thornton, Matt Wangerin) was a notable count.

Brant: Two at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 18 Oct (Kent Fiala, et al.) and at nearby Jennette's Pier 9 Nov (Jeff Lewis) were somewhat early.

Cackling Goose: This small goose began to show up in NC in mid-November, with seven in Creswell *Washington* 12 Nov (Ronnie Hewlette, Kevin O'Kane), one at Cane Creek Reservoir *Orange* 13-27 Nov (Joe Donahue, m. obs.), six on the pond at Wilkes Community College *Wilkes* 20 Nov (Dwayne Martin, m. obs.), and six near exit 548 on US-64 in *Washington* 30 Nov (Ricky Davis).

Trumpeter Swan: One was photographed in flight with Tundra Swans at Alligator River NWR *Dare* NC 23 Nov (Jelmer Poelstra, Roger Shaw, Matt Spangler).

Cinnamon Teal: A drake was seen and photographed by many at Santee Coastal Reserve *Charleston* SC 9 Nov into winter (Wendy Allen, m. obs.)

Eurasian Wigeon: A drake was seen at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 15 Oct into winter (m. obs.).

Northern Pintail: A hen photographed in the Lake Landing area of Mattamuskeet NWR *Hyde* NC 29 Aug (Dale Lambert) was somewhat early.

Green-winged Teal: 2500 in flight off Jennette's Pier *Dare* NC 9 Nov (Jeff Lewis) was an amazing count for the ocean. Lewis also noted high numbers of other dabbling ducks, Wood Ducks, American Wigeons, Northern Shovelers, and Northern Pintails, in flight off the pier that day.

Common Eider: One seen and photographed at the south end of the Bonner Bridge *Dare* NC 12 Aug (Ryan Hooks, m. obs.) was very unusual for early fall.

Surf Scoter: One on Price Lake *Watauga* NC 8 Nov (Steve Dowlan, et al.) and two on Lake Junaluska *Haywood* NC 23-24 (Stan & Connie Wulkowicz, et al.) were good finds for the mountain region. Sightings were made on four lakes in the NC Piedmont during the late fall, including three on Jordan Lake *Chatham* 9 Nov (Jonathan Cantrell).

White-winged Scoter: One seen and photographed on a pond in northeast *Durham* NC 18-19 Nov (Jeffery Blalock, m. obs.) was a good find inland.

Black Scoter: Individual hens on Price Lake *Watauga* NC 8 Nov (Steve Dowlan, et al.), on Lake Crabtree *Wake* NC (Dale Lambert, m. obs.), and on Lookout Shoals Lake *Catawba* NC 13 Nov (Dwayne Martin) were notable for those inland sites.

Common Merganser: A hen photographed at Valle Crucis Community Park *Watauga* NC 17-18 Aug (Judi Sawyer, Steve Dowlan) was unusual for that area.

Horned Grebe: One seen in flight from the Bull's Island Ferry *Charleston* SC during the Carolina Bird Club Fall Meeting 28 Sep (David McLean, et al.) was quite early.

Red-necked Grebe: Individuals were seen on four inland lakes in central NC in November—on Falls Lake *Durham* 2 Nov (Jelmer Poelstra), on Jordan Lake *Chatham* 9 Nov (Jonathan Cantrell), on Lake Townsend *Guilford* NC 17-26 Nov (Henry Link, Matt Wangerin, m. obs.), and Lake Norman *Iredell* and *Mecklenburg* 25 Nov (Dennis Kent, et al.).

Eared Grebe: Individuals were seen at the Hemingway WTP *Williamsburg* SC 2 Oct through 23 Nov (Jay Chandler, et al.) and at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 11 Nov into winter (Audrey Whitlock, et al.).

White-winged Dove: Sightings were made at five sites along the coast in late October through November. Two visiting a feeder in North Myrtle Beach *Horry* SC 29-30 Nov (Deb Winter) were notable as almost all sightings in the Carolinas are of individuals.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: The latest reported this fall were individuals at Cane Creek Park *Union* NC 19 Nov (Lucas Bobay, et al.), at Sandy Creek Park *Durham* NC 20 Nov (Heather Russell), along River Rd at Alligator River NWR *Dare* NC 24 Nov (Edward Landi, et al.), and on Sullivan's Island *Charleston* SC 25 Nov (Willy Hutcheson).

Black-chinned Hummingbird 27 Oct 19, Orange Co, NC. Photo by Maria de Bruyn

Black-billed Cuckoo: An immature bird captured at the banding station on East Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC 11 Nov (Daniel Errichetti, Josh Lefever, Dave Sandahl) was late.

Eastern Whip-poor-will: One in North Myrtle Beach *Horry* SC 28 Nov (Joe Gyekis) was late to depart.

Black-chinned Hummingbird: An adult male visited a feeder in Chapel Hill *Orange* NC 26 Oct through 2 Nov (Maria de Bruyn, m. obs.) and was banded 29 Oct (Susan Campbell).

Rufous Hummingbird: Two were banded in the NC mountains this fall—an immature male visiting a feeder five miles west of Sparta *Alleghany* 19 Oct

through 20 Nov (Harrol Blevins) banded 2 Nov (Dwayne Martin), and a first-year female visiting a feeder near Brevard *Transylvania* 27 Oct into winter (Nathaniel Axtell) banded 5 Nov (Mark Armstrong).

Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird: Individuals not identified to species, though more likely Rufous Hummingbirds, visited feeders in Buxton *Dare* NC 19 Aug (Ann Maddock), in *Orangeburg* SC 26 Sep (Julie Mobley), and in *Charleston* SC 12 Nov into winter (Lacy & Russell Johnson).

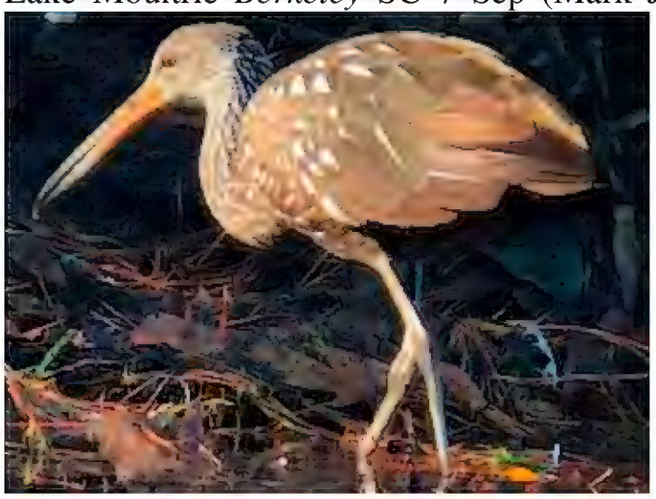
Calliope Hummingbird: An adult male visited a feeder in Waynesville *Haywood* NC 12-18 Nov (Charles Pritchard) and was banded 17 Nov (Mark Armstrong).

Clapper Rail: One collected by a wildlife rehabilitator after a collision in James City *Craven* NC 11 Sept (*fide* John Fussell) was likely a migrant.

Sora: 14 at North River Preserve, in an impoundment that had dried up and grown thick grass during the summer and then reflooded in the fall, *Carteret* NC 23 Nov (John Fussell, Marty Wall) was a notable count.

Common Gallinule: A juvenile seen and photographed at Biltmore Estate *Buncombe* NC 27 Oct (Doug Johnston, m. obs.) was unusual for the mountain region.

Limpkin: Limpkins were again well-reported this period. Sightings included two continuing at the upper end of Goose Creek Reservoir *Berkeley* SC throughout August and intermittently into winter (m. obs.), one photographed by a wildlife camera along Goodland Creek in *Orangeburg* SC 3 Sep (Whit Gibbons), one at the northeast corner of Lake Moultrie *Berkeley* SC 7 Sep (Mark Johnson), two along the Little Salkehatchie River in *Colleton* SC 3 Nov (Elizabeth Thomas), one near the dam on Lake Tillery *Stanly* NC 21 Nov through 2 Dec (Bonnie & Casey Lowder, m. obs.), and three on Big Otter Creek at the upper end of Lake Marion *Sumter* SC 25 Nov (Cathy Mathias). Limpkin is still on the review list in NC, so the report from *Stanly* requires review by the NC BRC.



Limpkin, 26 Nov 19, Stanly Co, NC. Photo by Matt Wangerin

Sandhill Crane: From the Fall 2018 period, 21 in flight over Lenoir *Caldwell* NC 28 Nov 2018 (Sharon Williams Bates, Peggy Hatley) provided a new record high count for the NC Piedmont.

Black-necked Stilt: Stilts bred at Cedar Island NWR *Carteret* NC this summer, as evidenced by a juvenile bird seen there with adults 4 Aug (John Fussell, Jack Fennell).

American Avocet: Multiple sightings were made at inland sites this fall, including ten at Silver Bluff Audubon Sanctuary *Aiken* SC 7 Aug (Lois Stacey, m. obs.), one in the Ellerbe Creek arm of Falls Lake *Durham* NC 19 Aug through 6 Sep (Jim Capel, Corinne Hibbard, m. obs.), three at Buckhorn Reservoir *Wilson* NC 5 Sep (Karen Lebing), one at Cane Creek Park *Union* NC 9 Oct (George Andrews), one at Buckhorn Reservoir 13 Oct through 10 Nov (Ricky Davis, m. obs.), one at Brier Creek Reservoir *Wake* NC 27 Oct (Brain Pendergraft, m. obs.), and one in Washington *Beaufort* NC 24 Nov (Ted Powell). A noticeable movement through western NC occurred 23 Oct, with 23, a new record high count for the mountain region, on Lake Junaluska *Haywood* (Stan & Connie Wulkowicz, et al.), five on Lake Julian *Buncombe* (m. obs.), and eight on a pond in *Cleveland* (Kade Lockhart, m. obs.) all seen that day.

American Avocet
1 Nov 19, Charleston Co, SC.
Photo by Jerry Kerschner

Black-bellied Plover: Two along Middleton Loop in *Stokes* NC 20-21 Aug (Jesse Anderson, m. obs.) were a possible first for that county.

American Golden-Plover: Sightings were down this fall compared to the past couple of years. Three at the Super Sod farm along Hooper Ln *Henderson* NC 29 Aug (Vicky Burke) and 30 Aug (Shelby Birch, Donnie Coody) was the high count. One at Buckhorn Reservoir *Wilson* NC 21 Sep through 4 Nov (Ricky Davis, m. obs.) was a first for that county.

Upland Sandpiper: The high count at Wilmington International Airport *New Hanover* NC this fall was six on 24 Aug (Mark Kosiewski). Locally unusual were two at Shaw Air Force Base *Sumter* SC 2 Aug (Christopher Moellering), one at the salt pond at Cape Point *Dare* NC 5 Aug (John Fussell, Steven Howell, Sage Church) and 17 Aug (m. obs.), and two to three at Vandemark Sod farm in *Nash* NC 17 Aug through 2 Sep (Ricky Davis).

Long-billed Curlew: Sightings involved one on East Shackleford Banks *Carteret* NC 1 Sep and 30 Sep (John Fussell, Steven Howell), two on Deveaux Bank *Charleston* SC 12-13 Sep (Nathan Senner, et al.), and one on the Big Bay Creek mudflats in Edisto Beach *Charleston* SC 14 Sep (Pam Ford, Craig Watson).

Bar-tailed Godwit: One seen on East Shackleford Banks *Carteret* NC 30 Sep (John Fussell, Steven Howell) was almost certainly the same individual that has wintered at that site for the past few years.

Hudsonian Godwit: Individuals were seen at the Wright Brothers National Monument *Dare* NC 9-28 Sep (Jonathan Cooley, m. obs.) and at Santee Coastal Reserve *Charleston* SC 16-27 Oct (Nancy Houlihan, Pat Moynahan, m. obs.). The latter sighting requires review by the SC BRC, as the species is still on the state's review list.

Purple Sandpiper: Four on the jetties at the Cedar Island Ferry Terminal *Carteret* NC 24 Nov (Marty Wall, John Fussell) was a notable count for a site away from the ocean.

Baird's Sandpiper: About a dozen were reported in NC this fall, mid-August through mid-October. One at the Murfreesboro WTP *Hertford* NC 24-25 Aug (Elisa & Nick Flanders, m. obs.) was a first for that county.

White-rumped Sandpiper: One where SC-243 crosses West Prong Little Beaver Dam Creek in *Anderson* SC 26 Nov (Steve Patterson) was rather late.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper: Sightings were typical this fall, with reports from five sites, three of those sod farms, between 17 Aug and 21 Sep.

Wilson's Phalarope: About half a dozen were reported this fall at scattered sites in coastal plain from late August through October, the latest being one at Santee Coastal Reserve *Charleston* SC 15-28 Oct (Ritch Lilly, m. obs.).

Red-necked Phalarope: 14 were seen at the American Turf farm in *Washington* NC 6 Sep (Ed Corey) following the passage of Hurricane Dorian. One was photographed along Hooper Ln *Henderson* NC 31 Oct through 1 Nov (Gary Harbour, m. obs.) following a period of heavy rain.

Black-legged Kittiwake
5 Nov 19, Dare Co, NC.
Photo by Jim Gould

Black-legged Kittiwake: An immature bird was seen resting on the beach in Southern Shores *Dare* NC 5 Nov (Jim Gould).

Sabine's Gull: A possible Sabine's Gull was seen and distantly photographed resting on the water of Jordan Lake *Chatham* NC 23 Oct (Jonathan Cantrell). Unfortunately, the bird was never seen in flight, which, with that species' diagnostic upper-wing pattern, would have clinched the identification.

Little Gull: A first-year bird seen on Falls Lake *Durham* NC 24 Aug (Jelmer Poelstra, m. obs.) was incredibly early and also very unusual for a site away from the coast.

Laughing Gull: Pairs on Ecusta Pond *Transylvania* NC 11 Sep (Frank Porter, m. obs.) and on Lake Hartwell *Anderson* SC 31 Oct (Andy Norris, Steve Patterson) were notable for sites so far from the coast.

Franklin's Gull: Two were seen on Jordan Lake *Chatham* NC 24-27 Oct (Mark Kosiewski, Matt Spangler, Jelmer Poelstra, m. obs.). One was seen at Buckhorn Reservoir *Wilson* NC 3 Nov (Ricky Davis, m. obs.).

Iceland Gull: Sightings began in late November with one on Harris Lake *Wake* NC 22-30 Nov (Eddie Owens, m. obs.), one off Jennette's Pier *Dare* NC 23 Nov (Andrew Thornton, et al.), two on Coquina Beach *Dare* NC 23-24 Nov (Jesse Anderson, Ed Corey, Trevor Sleight, m. obs.), and one off the Bogue Inlet Pier *Carteret* NC 25 Nov (Jacob Farmer).

Glaucous Gull: A second-winter bird was seen at Cape Point *Dare* NC 30 Nov (Logan Kahle).

Brown Noddy: Two, an adult and a juvenile, were seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 23 Aug (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.). One seen and photographed along the Duck Park Boardwalk *Dare* NC during the passage of Hurricane Dorian 6 Sep (Jonathan Cooley, m. obs.) was a great find ashore.

Sooty Tern: The passage of Hurricane Dorian resulted in multiple sightings on 6 Sep—an adult off Huntington Beach SP *Georgetown* SC (Paul Laurent), an adult on East Kiawah Beach *Charleston* SC (Jake Zadik), an adult along US-64 near Creswell *Washington* NC (Ed Corey), an adult along US-64 near Roper *Washington* NC (Corey), an adult at Jordan Lake *Chatham* NC (Andrew Thornton), an adult at Falls Lake *Durham* and *Wake* NC (Jelmer Poelstra), and two, an adult and a juvenile, over Cane Creek Park *Union* NC (Martina Nordstrand). An adult seen off Ft Moultrie *Charleston* SC 4 Sep (Michael Adams) was likely pushed closer to shore ahead of the storm. Two were collected by a wildlife rehabilitator in *Carteret* NC following Dorian, but later died (*fide* John Fussell).

Gull-billed Tern: One at Santee Coastal Reserve *Charleston* SC 31 Oct (Paul Laurent, et al.) was quite late.

Common Tern: 270 on Falls Lake *Durham* NC 5 Sep (Jelmer Poelstra), just prior to the passage of Hurricane Dorian, provided a new record high count for the Piedmont region. Other notable counts related to Dorian were 128 at Jordan Lake *Chatham* NC 6 Sep (Andrew Thornton) and 50 at Buckhorn Reservoir *Wilson* NC 6 Sep (Ann Brice).

Royal Tern: Inland sightings made 6 Sep following the passage of Hurricane Dorian included four on Lake Marion *Orangeburg* SC (Matt Malin), four at Buckhorn Reservoir *Wilson* NC (Ann Brice, m. obs.), two just east of Greenville *Pitt* NC (Howard Vainright),

two on Harris Lake *Wake* NC (Dale Lambert), and one on Jordan Lake *Chatham* NC (Lambert).

Sandwich Tern: Following the passage of Hurricane Dorian, individuals were seen at Falls Lake *Wake* NC 6 Sep (Brian Bockhahn) and at Lake Crabtree *Wake* NC 8 Sep (Dale Lambert)

Red-throated Loon: Sightings on inland lakes included one on Jordan Lake *Chatham* NC 17 Nov through 16 Dec (Steve Shultz, m. obs.), two on Jordan Lake 29-30 Nov (Jonathan Cantrell), and one on Lake Wheeler *Wake* NC 30 Nov through 3 Dec (Harry LeGrand, m. obs.).

Trindade Petrel: A light-morph bird was seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 10 Aug (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

Cory's Shearwater: Individuals over the ocean near Cape Point *Dare* NC 3 Aug (Ricky Davis) and off Jennette's Pier *Dare* NC 4 Aug (Davis) were good finds from shore.

Manx Shearwater: Individuals off Jennette's Pier *Dare* NC 9 Nov (Jeff Lewis) and 23 Nov (Ricky Davis) were somewhat early.

Wood Stork: Notable inland sightings made during the period of post-breeding dispersal included four at Aberdeen Lake Park *Moore* NC 6 Aug (Susan Campbell), eight in Chappells *Newberry* SC 8 Aug (Lewis Burke), seven at Rocky River Nature Park *Anderson* SC 17 Aug (Steve Patterson), one at Cane Creek Lake *Union* NC 20-21 Aug (Martina Nordstrand), nine along Old Cash Rd in *Chesterfield* SC 22 Aug (Kevin Kubach), 40 along Village Gate Rd in *Bertie* NC 18 Sep (Kimberly McCargo), two at Gibson Park *Guilford* NC 19-21 Sep (Matt Wangerin, m. obs.), 17 in the New Hope Creek arm of Jordan Lake *Chatham* NC 22 Sep (Jonathan Cantrell), three along Coker Rd in *Greenwood* SC 5 Oct (Chris Contakos), eight at the Flat River Waterfowl Impoundment *Durham* NC 8 Oct (Jeffrey Blalock), and 25 in flight over Cary *Wake* NC 31 Oct (Eddie Owens)

Magnificent Frigatebird: Individuals were seen at Oyster Creek *Carteret* NC 16 Aug (James Walter Morley), over Ocracoke Island *Hyde* NC 23 Aug (Letitia Lussier), over Holden Beach *Brunswick* NC 31 Oct (Scott Walker), and over Bulls Bay Cape Romain NWR *Charleston* SC 31 Oct (David McLean, et al.).

Brown Booby: Three were reported this fall—an adult on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 9 Aug (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.), a juvenile on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras 18 Aug (Patteson, Sutherland, et al.), and a juvenile off the north end of Folly Island *Charleston* SC 8 Nov (Keith McCullough, et al.).

Great Cormorant: One seen and photographed just below the dam on Lake Thurmond *McCormick* SC 15 Nov into winter (Milton Hobbs, m. obs.) was notable for an inland site.

Anhinga: Farthest inland were individuals at Tall Pines WMA *Greenville* SC 5 Aug (Michael Robertson) and at Lake Brandt *Guilford* NC 8 Aug (Paul Sumner, Matt Wangerin) and 21-22 Oct (Lee Capps, m. obs.).

American White Pelican: 96 on Kings Mountain Reservoir *Cleveland* NC 30-31 Oct (Bill Hooker, Pat Wilkinson, m. obs.) was a very high count for the NC Piedmont.

Brown Pelican: An immature bird photographed at Buckhorn Reservoir *Wilson* NC 24 Aug (Ricky Davis) was the only inland report.

Snowy Egret: During the period of post-breeding dispersal, Snowy Egrets were reported as far inland as *Guilford* NC and *Anderson* SC. One at the west end of Hyco Lake *Caswell* NC 3 Aug (David Pennebaker) was a possible first for that county.

Tricolored Heron: Farthest inland were two at Lake Lynn *Wake* NC 18-20 Jul (Ray Korpi, m. obs.), three in the Ellerbe Creek arm of Falls Lake *Durham* NC 31 Jul (Ben Graham, Sarah Connette), one in the New Hope Creek arm of Jordan Lake *Durham* and *Chatham* NC 1-11 Aug (Matt Spangler, m. obs.) and 22 Sep (Jonathan Cantrell), and one at Dobbins Farm *Anderson* SC 16 Aug (Jo Anne Keasler).

Reddish Egret: NC and SC's respective high counts were four on East Shackleford Banks *Carteret* NC 22 Sep (John Fussell, Steven Howell, Suzanne Wheatcraft) and ten on Marsh Island in Cape Romain NWR *Charleston* SC 29 Sep (John Cox).

Cattle Egret: 900 over North River Preserve *Carteret* NC, in flight towards recently harvested fields at the adjacent Open Grounds Farm, 25 Aug (John Fussell, et al.) was an impressive count. One at Cane Creek Reservoir *Union* NC 11-23 Aug (Martina Nordstrand, m. obs.) was locally unusual and a possible first for that county.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: One along the Dan River in *Rockingham* NC 6 Oct (Marty Wall) was a possible first for that county.

Glossy Ibis: One at South Cove County Park on Lake Keowee *Oconee* SC 30 Sep (Stephen Schutt) was unusual for a site so far inland.

Roseate Spoonbill: One at Rocky River Nature Park *Anderson* SC 8-16 Aug (Linda Montgomery, m. obs.) was notable for the Piedmont region. Farthest north along the coast were one to three around the Rivers Edge Golf Club in Shallotte *Brunswick* NC 14 Aug though 1 Oct (David Wilson, m. obs.). 130 at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access) *Jasper* SC 14 Nov (Robin Armetta, Steve Calver) was the high count in SC.

Swallow-tailed Kite: Post-breeding dispersal resulted in sightings of four at the Super Sod farm along Hooper Ln *Henderson* NC 3 Aug (Wayne Forsythe), 15 along SC-88 in *Anderson* SC 4 Aug (Luke Bower, Allison Guggenheimer), one along I-40 in Statesville *Iredell* NC 5 Aug (Ed Corey), one along US-421 in *Randolph* NC 11 Aug (Jacob Hall),

one over Occoneechee Mountain State Natural Area *Orange* NC 15 Aug (Brian Bockhahn), one over a field along NC-501 in *Scotland* NC 15 Aug (Gary & Helen Smith), one in Asheville *Buncombe* NC 20 Aug (Elizabeth Goldsmith), one along Jacks Creek Rd in *Yancey* NC 29 Aug (Joseph Tomcho), and one at the Macon County Airport *Macon* NC 7 Sep (Don Jones, *fide* Chris Kelly)

Golden Eagle: Sightings included a juvenile near Devotion *Surry* NC 16 Oct (Ron Storey), an adult near Devotion *Surry* NC 13 Nov (Royce Hough), an adult at Francis Marion National Forest *Berkeley* SC 19 Nov (Bob Dellinger), and a juvenile at Mason Farm Biological Reserve *Orange* NC 22 Nov (Fleeta Chauvigne).

Mississippi Kite: NC and SC's respective high counts were 50 over the Super Sod farm along Hooper Ln *Henderson* NC 24 Aug (Wayne Forsythe) and 145 over the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access) *Jasper* SC 6 Aug (Robin Armetta, Steve Calver).

Snail Kite: Pending review by the SC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent juvenile Snail Kite near the northeast corner of Lake Marion *Clarendon* SC 31 Oct through 7 Nov (Carl Bussells, Judson Riser, m. obs.). If accepted, the report would become the fourth official record for SC.

Snail Kite
3 Nov 19,
Clarendon Co, SC
Photo by Pamela Ford

Sharp-shinned Hawk: 29 over the west end of the Roosevelt Natural Area *Carteret* NC 11 Oct (John Fussell) was a notable count away from a hawk-watch site in the mountains.

Swainson's Hawk: Pending review by the SC BRC is the report with a photograph of an apparent Swainson's Hawk in flight in Awendaw *Charleston* SC 7 Nov (Tim Baerwald).

Rough-legged Hawk: One seen at Walnut Cove WTP in *Stokes* NC 21 Nov (Tony & Cara Woods) was a good find.

Northern Saw-whet Owl: Two along Mayo River Rd in *Rockingham* NC 13 Sep (Brian Bockhahn) were notable for the Piedmont region.

Ash-throated Flycatcher: Five were reported this fall. Individuals were photographed along the Port Royal Boardwalk *Beaufort* SC 22 Oct (Steven Guy), at Clanton Park in Charlotte *Mecklenburg* NC 31 Oct and 1 Nov (Greg Maxwell, m. obs.), at Alligator River NWR *Dare* NC 7 Nov (Greg Hudson), at the banding station on Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC 13 Nov (Aaron Given, et al.), and at Huntington Beach SP *Georgetown* SC 17-25 Nov (Mike Scott, m. obs.). The reports from SC and from *Mecklenburg* NC require review by the states' BRCs.

Ash-throated Flycatcher
7 Nov 19, Dare Co, NC.
Photo by Greg Hudson

Western Kingbird: One at the Biltmore Estate *Buncombe* NC 24 Sep (John Koon, m. obs.) was extremely unusual for the mountains, the first ever documented with photographs in that region. Along the coast, individuals were seen at Ft Fisher *New Hanover* NC 14 Oct (Howard Ferguson), in Salvo *Dare* NC 18 Oct (Karen Lebing), at Ft Moultrie *Charleston* SC 21 Oct (David Perry, m. obs.), at the Ft Fisher Ferry Terminal *New Hanover* NC 23 Oct (Jelmer Poelstra, m. obs.), at the Coastal Studies Institute on Roanoke Island *Dare* NC 28 Oct (Jeff Lewis), and near Gilliard *Georgetown* SC 17 Nov (Pam Ford, Craig Watson, et al.).

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher: Individuals were seen at Lake Monroe *Union* NC 14 Aug (Rick Spencer) and at Currituck Beach Lighthouse *Currituck* NC 8 Nov (Frank Lenik).

Olive-sided Flycatcher: About a dozen were reported this fall between 12 Aug and 10 Oct, most in the NC mountains. Individuals at Fants Grove WMA *Anderson* SC 28 Aug (Kevin Kubach, m. obs.) and in *Saluda* SC 12 Sep (Lewis Burke) were good finds for SC.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: Individuals along the Duck Park Boardwalk *Dare* NC 22 Sep (Al Hooks, Jeff Lewis) and at Little Kinnakeet Lifesaving Station *Dare* NC 22 Sep (Michael Gosselin, m. obs.) were unusual for the Outer Banks. Three were banded on Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC this fall, with one 23 Oct being somewhat late (Daniel Errichetti, Josh Lefever, et al.).

Vermilion Flycatcher: Pending review by the NC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent first-year male Vermilion Flycatcher at Mackay Island NWR *Currituck* NC 12 Oct (Allen Bryan, Amresh Vaidya). If accepted the report would provide NC with its sixth record and its first in almost a decade.

Loggerhead Shrike: Individuals at Alligator River NWR *Dare* NC 20 Sep (Karen Lebing, m. obs.) and at the CMAST building in Morehead City *Carteret* NC 22 Oct (Craig Harms) were unusual for those areas.

Bell's Vireo: Pending review by the SC BRC is the report of an apparent Bell's Vireo seen 23 Oct and then photographed 24 Oct at Ft Moultrie *Charleston* SC (Michael Adams).

Philadelphia Vireo: One seen and photographed at Lake Lynn *Wake* NC 1 Nov (Lynn Erla Beegle, Fleeta Chauvigne, Harry LeGrand, Lori White, et al.) was quite late.

Common Raven: One in southwest *Halifax* NC 10 Nov (Merrill Lynch) was unusual for that area.

House Wren: 26 at North River Preserve *Carteret* NC 13 Oct (John Fussell, Steven Howell) was a notable count.

Sedge Wren: Individual migrants at Jackson Park *Henderson* NC 7-11 Oct (Vicky Burke, m. obs.), at Warren Wilson College *Buncombe* NC 10-18 Oct (m. obs.), and at Island Ford Landing *Transylvania* NC 15-16 Oct (Nathaniel Axtell, m. obs.) were good finds for the mountain region.

Bicknell's Thrush: The NC Museum of Natural Sciences received a leg-banded specimen (catalog # NCSM 27226) after a window collision in Edenton *Chowan* NC 9 Oct (*fide* Brian O'Shea). The leg-band revealed it was banded in Vermont in July 2015.

Swainson's Thrush: Individuals photographed in Davidson *Mecklenburg* NC 8 Nov (Arch McCallum) and at Cowan's Ford Wildlife Refuge *Mecklenburg* NC 25 Nov (Kevin Metcalf) were late.

Lapland Longspur
6 Nov 19, Buncombe Co, NC.
Photo by Jay Wherley

Cedar Waxwing: A nest with two juveniles at Carver's Gap on Roan Mountain *Mitchell* NC 28-29 Sep (Rick Knight) was rather late in the season for an active nest.

Pine Siskin: One amongst a flock of goldfinches at Mason Farm Biological Reserve *Orange* NC 8 Sep (Roger Shaw) was very early for a site outside of the mountains, especially during a non-irruption year.

Lapland Longspur: An immature bird seen and photographed at the Biltmore Estate *Buncombe* NC 4-7 Nov (Aaron Steed, m. obs.) was a great find for the mountain region and a possible first for that county.

Snow Bunting: One was photographed on the beach near Cape Point *Dare* NC 17 Nov (Elizabeth Wilkins).

Lark Sparrow: About a dozen sightings of individuals were made this fall, most at sites along the coast. One at Archie Elledge WTP *Forsyth* NC 30 Aug (John Haire) was unusual for the Triad area. Wintering birds began to return to feeders in *Camden* NC 7 Nov, with up to five seen there into winter (James Harrison).

Clay-colored Sparrow: About a dozen sightings were made 25 Sep through November, most at sites along the coast. Individuals photographed along the Chinqua-Penn Walking Trail *Rockingham* NC 2 Oct (Marty Wall) and at the Gibson Rd Soccer Complex *Lexington* SC 22 Oct (Jennifer Shockley, m. obs.) were notable for those areas.

LeConte's Sparrow: One well-photographed at Ebenezer Point on Jordan Lake *Chatham* NC 9 Nov (Brian Strassburger) was the only one reported this fall.

Nelson's Sparrow: Inland, individual migrants were photographed in the New Hope Creek arm of Jordan Lake *Chatham* NC 5 Oct (Mark Kosiewski, Jelmer Poelstra, Matt Spangler), at Warren Wilson College *Buncombe* NC 10-11 Oct (Miles Buddy, m. obs.), and at the Biltmore Estate *Buncombe* NC 19-20 Oct (Simon Thompson, m. obs.).

Lincoln's Sparrow: Dozens of sightings were made October through November. One captured and banded on East Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC 28 Oct (Josh Lefever, et al.) was unusual for that area.

Swamp Sparrow: One at Cane River Park *Yancey* NC 30 Sep (Lucas Bobay) was somewhat early.

Orchard Oriole: An immature male photographed along the Sullivan's Island Nature Trail *Charleston* SC 27 Nov (Willy Hutcheson) was incredibly late.

Northern Waterthrush: 22 captured and banded in one day on East Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC 10 Sep (Josh Lefever, et al.) was a notable count. One at Tanglewood Park *Forsyth* NC 1 Nov (Carol Cunningham) was late for a site in the Piedmont. In southeast SC, where a few tend to linger or over-winter each year, individuals were seen at Savannah NWR *Jasper* 23 Nov (Ed Blitch, Matt Johnson) and at Caw Caw Interpretive Center *Charleston* 26-27 Nov (Marc Regnier, m. obs.).

Prothonotary Warbler: An immature male captured and banded on East Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC 31 Oct (Daniel Errichetti, et al.) was very late.

Tennessee Warbler: One at Fred Fletcher Park *Wake* NC 8 Nov (Harry LeGrand, Geneva Pigott, et al.) was late.

Nashville Warbler: Dozens of reports were made this fall, mostly late September to mid-October. A count of four around the north end of Oregon Inlet *Dare* NC 19 Oct (Kent Fiala, John Fussell, et al.) was notable. One seen along the Duck Park Boardwalk *Dare* NC 23 Nov (Lucas Bobay, et al.) was quite late.

Connecticut Warbler: Individuals were seen at Mayo River SP *Rockingham* NC 13 Sep (Brian Bockhahn), at Price Park *Guilford* NC 28 Sep (Matt Wangerin), at Warren Wilson College *Buncombe* NC 30 Sep (Aaron Steed), and at Jackson Park *Henderson* NC 7-14 Oct (Lucas Bobay, m. obs.). Notably, two were seen at Jackson Park 10 Oct (Kevin Burke, Jay Wherley).

Mourning Warbler: Nine reports were made this fall, 4 Sep through 9 Oct, mostly at sites around Asheville NC. An immature bird captured and banded on East Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC 23 Sep (Josh Lefever, et al.) was notable for SC.

Hooded Warbler: Individuals at the Asheville School *Buncombe* NC 6-9 Nov (Seth Buddy, Michael Hill) and along the Boone Greenway *Watauga* NC 10 Nov (Steve Dowlan) were late.

American Redstart: Individuals at Lake Junaluska *Haywood* NC 18 Nov (John Lawshe), at Savannah NWR *Jasper* SC 23 Nov (Ed Blitch, Matt Johnson), and in the Bluff Unit of Santee NWR *Clarendon* SC 30 Nov (Pam & Randall Sale) were late.

Kirtland's Warbler: Individuals were seen and photographed on Flat Top Mountain *Buncombe* NC 24 Sep (Cathy Adair, Richard Meltzer) and at the Biltmore Estate *Buncombe* NC 14-15 Oct (Doug Johnston, Simon Thompson, m. obs.).

Northern Parula: Three along the Duck Park Boardwalk *Dare* NC 23 Nov (Lucas Bobay, et al.) was an amazing count for that late date.

Magnolia Warbler: One photographed in the Cuddo Unit of Santee NWR *Clarendon* SC 13 Nov (John Becker) was late.

Bay-breasted Warbler: A count of 125 migrating through Balsam Gap *Buncombe* NC 1 Oct (Aaron Steed, et al.) was notable.

Blackburnian Warbler: Individuals photographed at the Asheville School *Buncombe* NC 24 Nov (Seth Buddy, Michael Hill) and on the jetty on the south side of Murrells Inlet *Georgetown* SC 26 Nov (Elizabeth Anderegg, m. obs.) were very late.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: An adult male at Greenfield Lake *New Hanover* NC 22 Nov (Jim Holcomb) was the latest one reported this fall.

Townsend's Warbler: Pending review by the NC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent Townsend's Warbler along the Duck Park Boardwalk *Dare* NC 28-29 Sep (Jeff Lewis, m. obs.). If accepted, the report would provide NC with its fifth record.

Canada Warbler: One along the Duck Park Boardwalk *Dare* NC 15-19 Sep (Ricky Davis, m. obs.) was unusual for the Outer Banks. One photographed in Beaufort *Beaufort* SC 25 Sep (Tammy Hester) was unusual for that area as well.

Scarlet Tanager: One on East Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC 1 Nov (Josh Lefever, et al.) was somewhat late.

Western Tanager: One photographed at Ft Raleigh on Roanoke Island *Dare* NC 18 Oct (Jeff Lewis, et al.) was somewhat early. By late November, individuals had shown up at feeders in Raleigh *Wake* NC 25-29 Nov (Sam Jolly) and in Wilmington *New Hanover* NC 29 Nov (Craig Kittner).

Black-headed Grosbeak
17 Oct 19, New Hanover Co, NC.
Photo by Samuel Cooper

Black-headed Grosbeak: A female was seen and photographed along Burnt Mill Creek in Wilmington *New Hanover* NC 17 Oct (Sam Cooper) though unfortunately never relocated.

Blue Grosbeak: An immature bird photographed at Lake Conestee Nature Park *Greenville* SC 11 Nov (Kevin Kubach) and 12 Nov (Anthony Martin) was late.

Lazuli Bunting: Pending review by the NC BRC is the report of a male Lazuli Bunting at a feeder in Beaufort *Carteret* NC 19 Aug (Patricia Finch). If accepted, the report would provide the third record for NC.

Indigo Bunting: Individuals photographed at Ft Moultrie *Charleston* SC 21 Nov (Charles Donnelly) and at a feeder in Forestbrook *Horry* SC 23 Nov (John Hutchens) were the latest ones reported this fall.

Painted Bunting: An adult male at Prairie Ridge Ecostation *Wake* NC 10 Oct (Brian O'Shea) was unusual for the Triangle area.

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Cover: Great Egret, 16 Mar 2020, Pinckney Island NWR, SC.
Photo by Patricia Kappmeyer

Breeding Status of the Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*) in the Piedmont of the Upper Pee Dee Region of the Carolinas

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The Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*) breeds throughout most of the Piedmont physiographic province of North Carolina. Its breeding status is still poorly defined in the extreme southeast where the birds would be confined to partly open brushy areas with shrubs, hedges, and grasses within cities and towns (Sykes 1966, Seriff 2018, LeGrand et al. 2019). The current breeding range of the Song Sparrow in the upper Pee Dee region within the Piedmont of the Carolinas is unclear because evidence of long-term occupancy during the breeding season is lacking.

LeGrand et al. (2019) state that Song Sparrows breed in every county in the southeastern Piedmont of North Carolina, but Seriff (2018) did not document any breeding records east of Charlotte or southeast of Salisbury, Rowan County. Further east and southeast, Song Sparrows are apparently established along the Wilgrove Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) route (present 12 of 19 years since 2001; 63%). Single Song Sparrows were reported during two years each on two other BBS routes east of Wilgrove (Uwharrie, now inactive: 1993, 1997; Oakboro: 2005–2006). No Song Sparrows were reported along the Biscoe route, which passes near but not within Troy, Montgomery County (Pardieck et al. 2018). Near the North Carolina border in South Carolina, Song Sparrows have nested no further east than western Lancaster County at a park in Lancaster in 1984 and 1992 (LeGrand 1993, Cely 2003, Seriff 2018).

The purpose of this note is to document the current breeding status of the Song Sparrow in this region. This note includes unpublished breeding evidence of Song Sparrows at Troy, Montgomery County, NC, in 1994.

Methods

I covered the same geographic area of the upper Pee Dee region in the Carolinas for Song Sparrow in 2018 as I did for the House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*; McNair 2019). The upper Pee Dee region as defined herein includes six counties or portions thereof in two states, and a total of 29 cities and towns ranging in human population size from 110 in McFarlan, NC to 9080 in Rockingham, NC. In 2019, I obtained additional data on Song Sparrows at Troy, NC. Troy (elevation 202 m) includes a commercial district centered along two main highways and mature residential communities that are heavily vegetated with old trees. All neighborhoods have been stable with few habitat changes having occurred over the last 25 years. Most residential dwellings are detached single units over 50 years old. Each residence is typically fronted by a dense lawn, bordered by ornamental shrubs and backed by lawns, shrubs, gardens, or play areas. Railroad tracks pass through the center of town.

I conducted a complete census of singing male Song Sparrows at Troy over 13 days from 9 April to 6 May. A total of 20 hours was devoted to this effort, 57% before noon (mostly mid-morning) and 43% after noon (mostly early evening). I used the spot-mapping method to delineate their territories. A minimum of 2 registrations of singing males at the same site recorded at least 10 days apart were required for designation as established breeding territories. Singing males that did not meet this criterion were considered "floaters", i.e., not on established territories. I also recorded any additional breeding evidence (e.g., females present) during the 2019 census.

I calculated the density of singing male Song Sparrows on established territories (ignoring floaters) by connecting the perimeter of the outermost territories by straight lines and dividing this area by the total number of male territories. The location of one established territory was an outlier, so I also calculated the density of singing male Song Sparrows on established territories at Troy by ignoring this outlier.

I compared these two density measurements of Song Sparrows at Troy to other density measurements based on the spot-mapping method that are available from Breeding Bird Censuses (BBC) conducted in residential or commercial areas of eastern North America where Song Sparrows have been present (Aldrich 1984, Arcese et al. 2002). I extracted these studies through 2009, the last year results were published after an earlier hiatus from 1997–2000 (Gardali and Lowe 2006, Lowe and DeSante 2012) and from other available literature that used the spot-mapping method. Censuses from these missing years and after 2009 are not accessible (Hochachka 2019).

Many confounding variables can affect analyses of BBC data, including plot size, so except for results from two plots of 6.1 ha that were available from a very detailed study (Beissinger and Osborne 1982) and a larger plot from The White House (Evenden and Pyle 1972, Evenden 1979), all other plots were a minimum of the recommended 8.1 ha (Engstrom 1981, Engstrom and James 1984). Most extracted BBC studies were conducted in one or two years, but longer studies were available from Massachusetts (3 years) and at Carey, Ohio (5 years).

I excluded censuses conducted in areas such as cemeteries or arboretums, suburban or urban parks, or wooded ravines in suburban areas. These censuses did not contain or rarely contained residential and commercial buildings so would not be comparable to Troy, NC or other censuses cited herein.

I grouped all census plots into five categories: mature residential, recent residential, residential, suburban development in pine-oak forest, residential and commercial. Categories are based on detailed descriptions of habitat characteristics such as the presence and number of tall trees and age and extent of residential housing.

Results

I only found singing male Song Sparrows on territory at Troy. Eight singing males (plus two females) were detected during surveys on 14 May 1994, whereas six singing males were detected on 19 May 2018.

In 2019, I documented 34 singing male Song Sparrows on established territories (plus at least 6 females) during a complete census of the entire town and settled outlying areas adjacent to the town boundary (Figure 1). I also documented four floaters, three of which were located outside the perimeter of the established territories.

Birds on established territories were located in residential yards or in vegetated commercial areas including three males present in ruderal habitat in lumber yards, two beside yarn plants, and two along a railroad track through the center of town. Only five territories (15%) contained streams, although intermittent running water was available on territories at many other sites (e.g., fountains at the town hall, swimming pools and water baths at residences, sprinkling systems and outside faucets in all areas).

The breeding density of territorial male Song Sparrows at Troy in 2019 was 0.10 males/ha or 1 male per 10.05 ha based on an area of 341.69 ha. If one outlier of an established male territory is removed, the breeding density was 0.14 males/ha or 1 male per 7.03 ha based on an area of 231.9 ha (Figure 1).

The low breeding densities of singing male Song Sparrows at Troy are comparable to four BBC plots in eastern North America categorized as residential and commercial areas (Table 1). All breeding densities on BBC plots were low ($\leq$ 0.3 males/ha) except for higher densities on four of the six plots conducted in mature residential areas (Table 1). Breeding densities were not associated with plot area (Figure 2) (Spearman's r = -0.26, n = 14, P = 0.38). Troy was excluded because of large plot size. The highest breeding density at Oxford, Ohio was an outlier.

Discussion

This study documents that territorial Song Sparrows are established at Troy, NC, but Song Sparrows were not breeding in early successional habitat at any other location in the upper Pee Dee region of the Carolinas. Troy (3,414) is the largest town in Montgomery County, but Song Sparrows do not breed in the larger town of Wadesboro (5,467) in Anson County, NC (U.S. Census Bureau 2018). Wadesboro is closer than Troy (75 km compared to 87 km) and east-southeast of established breeding populations at Charlotte, NC. This suggests that Song Sparrows arrived at Troy from a west-northwesterly direction, perhaps from Statesville (via Salisbury and Albemarle) where breeding was first confirmed in the Piedmont in 1933 (Sykes 1966, Seriff 2018).

The low breeding densities of Song Sparrows at Troy, which is at the limit of its southeasterly breeding range, were similar to similarly categorized communities in eastern North America (Aldrich 1984, Arcese et al. 2002, this study). The highest breeding densities in mature residential plots at Oxford, Ohio (Beissinger and Osborne 1982), an outlier, further supports the conclusion that inclusion of small plot sizes can lead to spurious, unsupported, or unreliable results (Engstrom 1981, Engstrom and James 1984).

The future expansion of the Song Sparrow along the breeding range front in the upper Pee Dee region of the Carolinas where habitat is not a limiting factor is difficult to predict. Single unmated male Song Sparrows singing on territories for more than one day have been documented slightly further east of Troy at Biscoe, Montgomery County (4 May–16 June 2018; McNair, unpubl.) and nearby in the Sandhills of Moore County at Southern Pines (3–7 June 1999; Davis 2000, LeGrand 2019) and at Pinehurst (21 May–8 June 2018; McNair, unpubl.). The spread of this species to cities and towns such as Troy at the limit of its breeding range is not detrimental because a new species has been added to the otherwise limited avifauna in these environments where habitat is not ephemeral. A firm population estimate is now available from Troy, NC, where suitable Song Sparrow habitat and nest strata are probably not saturated. However, unlike the House Wren

(McNair 2019), the breeding status of the Song Sparrow has remained static in the upper Pee Dee region for over 25 years.

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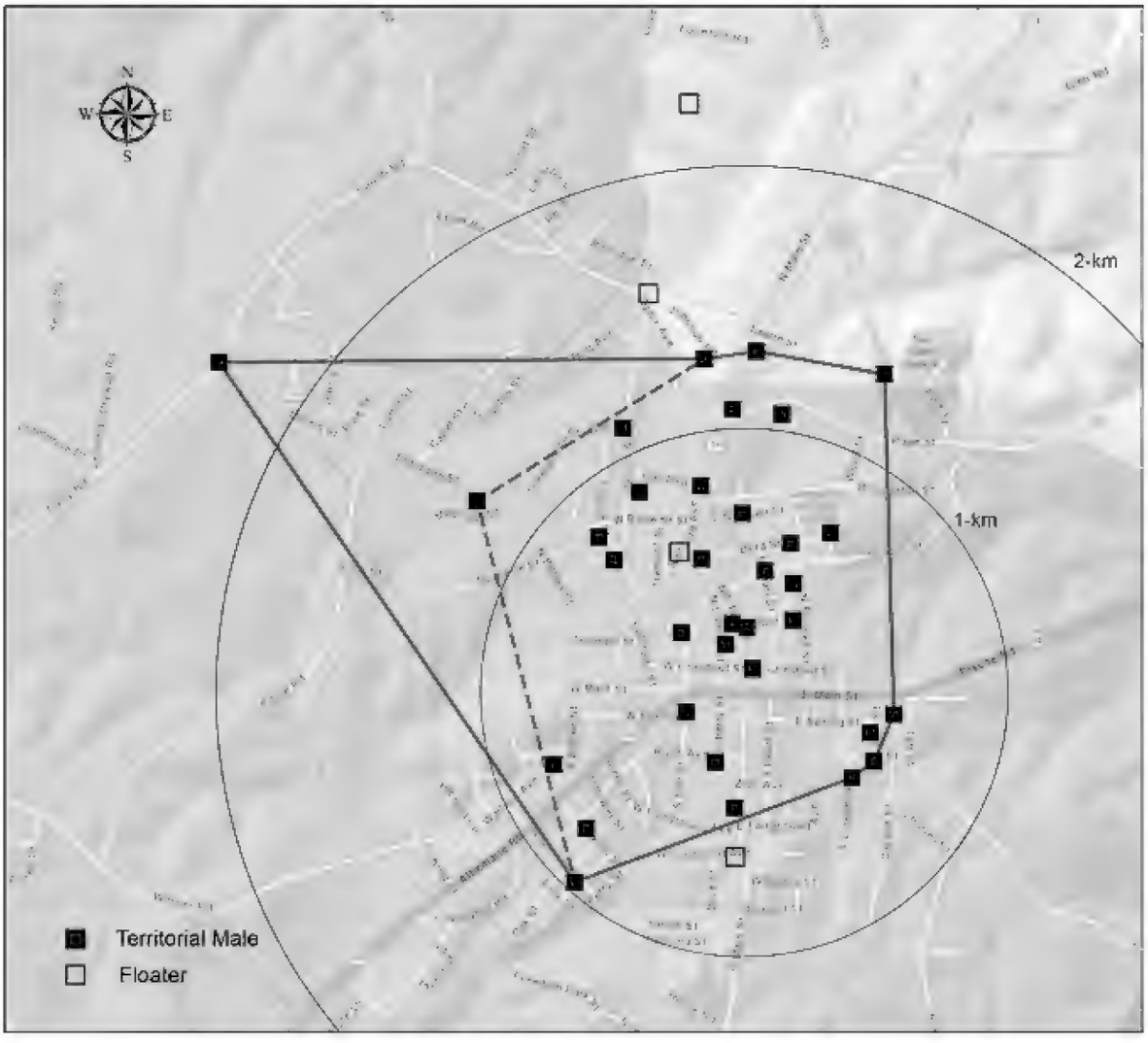

Figure 1. The location of 34 established breeding territories and 4 floaters of singing male Song Sparrows at Troy, NC, in 2019. Filled squares represent established territories, whereas open squares represent floaters. The thick solid dark gray line connects the perimeter of the established territories, whereas the inner thick segmented dark gray line that connects to the solid dark gray line excludes one established breeding territory (an outlier, based on its relative isolation compared to all other established territories). The two thin black lines represent concentric rings of 1-km and 2-km distances from the center of Troy (intersection of NC Highways 27 and 134).

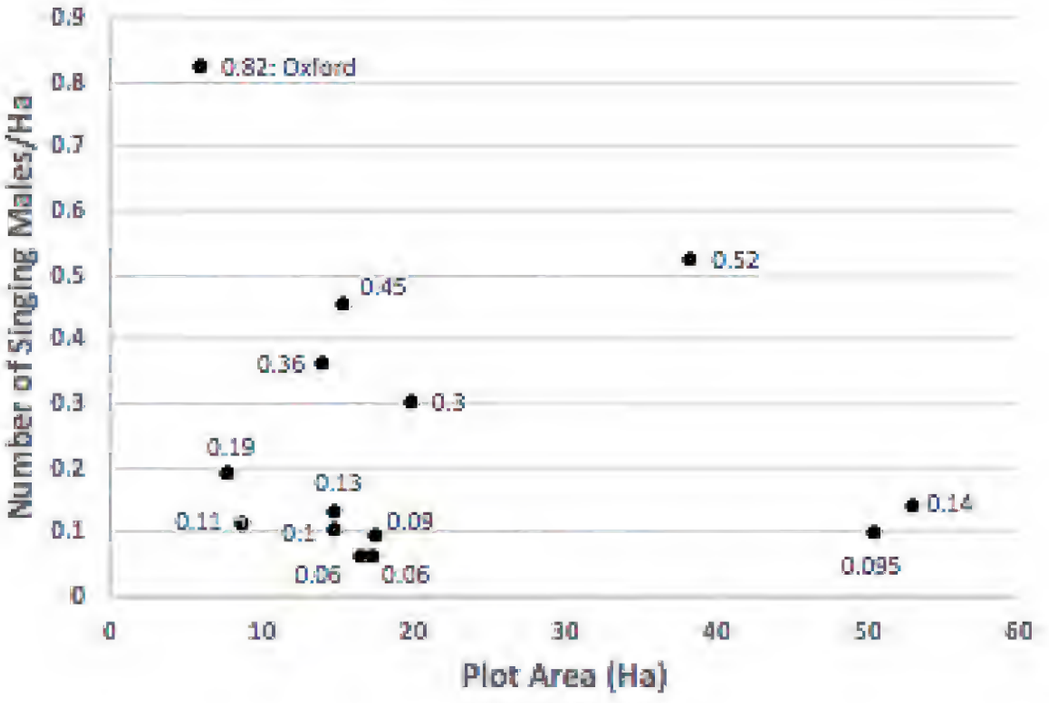

Figure 2. Breeding densities of singing male Song Sparrows in relationship to plot area on 14 BBC censuses in eastern North America. Breeding densities for seven sites with two measurements were collapsed into one measurement per site by taking the mean of both measurements. For sites with more than two measurements, breeding density was collapsed into one measurement by taking the mean of the range of measurements.

Table 1. Breeding densities of Song Sparrows at Troy, NC, compared to other breeding densities obtained from Breeding Bird Census (BBC) plots in residential or commercial areas of eastern North America.

State or Province	Locality	Year	Plot Area (ha)	Density (singing males/ha)	Reference
Mature Residential					
Ohio	Toledo	1971	17.6	0.09	Tramer 1971
Ohio	Oxford: 2 Sites	1976	6.1	0.66, 0.98	Beissinger and Osborne 1982
Ohio	Carey	1976–1977, 1979–1981	12.1–16.19	0.15–0.56	Claugus 1977–1978, 1980–1982

State or Province	Locality	Year	Plot Area (ha)	Density (singing males/ha)	Reference
New York	Ithaca	1965	15.4	0.45	Simmers 1965
New Jersey	Prospect Park	1976	8.9	0.11	de Wall Malefyt 1977
Virginia	Fairfax County	1979	38.5	0.52	Aldrich and Coffin 1980
Recent Residential					
Ontario	Ottawa	1976	53	0.14	Erskine 1977
New Jersey	Bernardsville	1995	20	0.3	Fantina 1996
Residential					
Washington, DC	The White House	1972, 1978	7.9	0.25, 0.13	Evenden and Pyle 1972; Evenden 1979
Suburban Development in Pine-Oak Forest					
Massachusetts	Plymouth County	1979–1980, 1982	15	0.03–0.17	Smith 1983
Residential and Commercial					
Manitoba	Swan River	1972	17.5	0.06	Erskine 1972
Québec	Senneterre	1969	15	0.13	Erskine 1970
New Brunswick	Sackville	1979, 1981	50.5	0.07, 0.12	Erskine 1980, 1982
Ohio	Carey	1982–1983	13.76, 19.4	0.07, 0.05	Claugus 1983, 1984
North Carolina	Troy[1]	2019	341.69, 231.9	0.10, 0.14	This study

[1]Includes two calculations for two areas: 1) for all established territories within the plot, and 2) excludes one established territory (an outlier compared to the locations of all other established territories).

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2019 Spring Migration Counts in North Carolina

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Twenty-one count areas provided data for the 2019 Spring Count, one less than the previous year. The Southern Pines Count was not conducted because the dates interfered with the Carolina Bird Club meeting at that location. There were comments from around the state about the spring count being unusual this year, and the data seem to suggest those intuitive impressions were correct. Total species (223) for the North Carolina Spring Count was well below the average of 237 for the previous ten years. Total individual birds (74,718) was well below the previous ten-year average of 89,663 and lower than any count in the previous ten years, although the number of participants (446) was average and total team-hours (1261.83) was only very slightly below the average of 1297.55. Birds per team hour (59.21) were also well below the average of 69.37 and lower than any in the previous ten years. This number represents the amount of effort taken to find the average number of individual birds. It is difficult to speculate about the reasons for the odd results, but birds passing through North Carolina or leaving the state to breed farther north might be at least one factor. Table 1 compares number of species found this year for various families of birds compared to the past five years.

Table 1: Number of species in various bird families found on spring counts.

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
# species of						
Waterfowl	17	16	15	13	16	12
Shorebirds	21	23	24	24	25	21
Gulls/Terns	13	14	13	14	14	11
Warblers	33	34	33	30	32	33
Sparrows	15	14	16	15	13	11

It's possible that many of the birds in these categories migrated earlier than in an average year. Weather patterns may be a factor. Although total warbler species found was typical, the numbers of individuals of many species typically found passing through the Piedmont/Coast count areas during spring migration were also lower than average in most cases (Table 2). One major exception was Cape May Warbler. Only Piedmont and coastal counts were used in this table because some of these species remain to breed in

the mountains. Also, since Southern Pines did not participate in the 2019 count, the data for that count were subtracted from the Piedmont totals for 2014 to 2018.

Table 2: Total numbers of more common warbler species found passing through the Piedmont/Coast region in spring during the 2019 spring count compared to the previous five years.

Piedmont/Coast						
# warblers	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**
Northern Waterthrush	54	42	58	38	27	27
Blue-winged	9	33	11	5	3	4
Cape May	18	13	78	29	67	108
Magnolia	27	9	29	24	14	8
Chestnut-sided	18	8	27	19	19	4
Blackpoll	29	3	30	19	24	16
Black-throated Blue	414	134	421	270	181	158
Black-throated Green	86	31	46	20	13	12

To understand whether this trend applies to only migratory warblers continuing farther north or also to migratory warblers arriving to breed in the North Carolina Piedmont and coast, Table 3 compares totals for some of those species. As with Table 2, the Southern Pines counts for 2014-2018 were eliminated so that numbers were comparable with 2019.

Table 3: Total numbers of some warbler species that migrate to and breed in the Piedmont/Coast region in 2019 compared to the previous five years.

Piedmont/Coast						
# warblers	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**
Ovenbird	678	575	621	531	521	431
Black-and-white	227	254	321	164	170	146
Common Yellowthroat	675	556	702	502	447	466
Hooded	268	233	235	200	230	218
Northern Parula	707	561	657	546	610	581

# warblers	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Prairie	370	400	273	231	234	244
Pine	817	873	761	610	692	716

Of course, all of these species also include individuals who continue to fly farther north than North Carolina, so this is an imperfect measure. Some species show little difference and others are lower in 2019. Table 3 also shows Pine Warbler numbers, a permanent resident, and those numbers show little difference. Table 4 shows two species that commonly winter in North Carolina and leave in spring. If lower migrant numbers are the result of earlier migration these two species might also be an indicator of earlier movement. Results for these two species suggest generally lower numbers in 2019, but can vary greatly from year to year.

Table 4: Piedmont/Coast Common Winter Residents

Piedmont/Coast winter residents	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
White-throated Sparrow	961	1413	564	162	639	317
Yellow-rumped Warbler	1275	1711	1123	871	1108	539

Finally, Table 5 shows 2019 warbler migrant numbers in the mountains compared to the previous five years. This table only includes the five counts that consistently reported since 2014 including Transylvania, Buncombe, and Henderson Counties and the two higher elevation Important Bird Areas (IBA) of the Pisgah Ridge/Balsam Mountains and the Black Mountains. This table includes three species mostly found at lower to middle elevations that also breed in the piedmont including Ovenbird, Black-and-white Warbler, and Hooded Warbler. The other five species are largely middle to higher elevation mountain breeders in North Carolina.

Table 5: Mountain Warbler Migrants

Mountain # warblers	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Ovenbird	401	335	348	294	320	234
Black-and-white	180	197	199	189	227	130
Hooded	261	208	255	179	230	207
Chestnut-sided	394	407	402	406	369	462

Blackburnian	179	174	182	178	252	221
# warblers	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**
Black-throated Blue	298	465	361	380	345	354
Black-throated Green	376	529	529	476	526	501
Canada	226	414	325	349	299	360

Interestingly, the lower elevation warbler species generally show similarly lower numbers in 2019 as they do in the Piedmont, but the higher elevation species show virtually no significant differences. This might actually result from the dates the mountain counts are conducted. The two higher elevation counts are conducted late in May, largely after most migrants have passed through the area and only breeding birds remain. The other three counts are usually conducted earlier in May and, although the other three counts do have some high elevation areas in their counts, those areas represent only a small portion of the total count. The two high elevation counts are in areas almost entirely above 4500 feet. Thus, while species like Chestnut-sided, Black-throated Green and Black-throated Blue Warblers show very low numbers of individuals passing through the piedmont in 2019, numbers of these species in the mountains, which represents largely birds that have completed their migration rather than those passing through, show 2019 to be more typical of previous years.

It does appear possible that migration may have started earlier in 2019 resulting in fewer migrants found during the late April/early May counts. Whether this becomes a trend over the long term with climate change may only become apparent with additional years of data.

In 2019 there were fewer atypical species found than usual, but there were some that deserve mentioning. Possibly most unusual were six American White Pelicans found on the Pilot Mountain count. That count also produced a Wilson's Warbler. Although winter waterfowl was in relative short supply as most had departed, the Grandfather Mountain count found a Greater Scaup and the Mecklenburg count a Lesser Scaup. Kites were represented by one Swallow-tailed Kite on the Brunswick count, two Mississippi Kites on the Jordan Lake count, and one Mississippi each on the Kerr Lake and Raven Rock counts. One American Bittern was found on the Rockingham count, another on the Jordan Lake count, and an amazing ten found on the Durham count. One Horned Lark appeared on the Rockingham count with a good count of 12 on the Raven Rock count. There were two late Purple Finches found, one on the Iredell count and the other on the Falls Lake count. There were a few unusual warblers found besides the Wilson's on Pilot Mountain count. These included Tennessee on the Watauga count, an Orange-crowned on the Raven Rock count, and a Bay-breasted on Pisgah/Balsams and Grandfather Mountain counts. A nice count of five Golden-winged Warblers was found on the Watauga count, with none found anywhere else in the state. Marsh Wrens were very scarce with only one on the Mecklenburg count and one on the Brunswick count. Red

Crossbills arrived late this year, so were found only on the Black Mountains count in late May.

Most abundant birds found in the mountains were Eastern Towhee, American Robin, Red-eyed Vireo, American Crow, and Song Sparrow. Most abundant species in the Piedmont were Northern Cardinal, Carolina Wren, Canada Goose, American Robin, and Red-eyed Vireo. On the coastal count the most abundant birds, Royal Tern, Short-billed Dowitcher, Laughing Gull, Red Knot, and Semipalmated Plover, were all from flocks on or near the shore.

Details of individual counts including names of compilers and participants as well as count highlights and a list of species found exclusively on each count follow.

Mountains

Transylvania County – Count date May 5th, 119 species, 3271 individuals, 22 participants, 77.58 party-hours. Elevation ranges from 2100 to 5600 ft. Weather: Pleasant, clear, calm and mild weather.

Compiler: Michael Plauché (captainbluegill@gmail.com)

Participants: Nathanial Axtell, Marvin Barg, Michele Barg, Joe Bartusis, George Dunkelberg, Ray Dunkelberg, Elizabeth Galloway, Susan Goldworthy, Jennifer Harper, Gary Harris, Kathy Harris, Joan McDonald, Malcolm McDonald, Janie Owens, Michael Plauché, Frank Porter, Marcus Simpson, Norma Siebenheller, Martine Stolk, Charlie Threatte, Linda Threatte, and Marilyn Westphal.

Exclusives: None

Notes: Weather was quite pleasant for the Transylvania Spring Count on May 5th. Twenty-two participants counted 119 species. Although there were fewer participants than in previous years, thus less time and fewer miles, the species count was on the high end. However, individual numbers were down. Hopefully this is solely the result of less effort and not indicative of a general decline.

Notable misses included Great Egret, American Kestrel, Barred and Eastern-Screech Owl, Peregrine Falcon, Purple Martin, Blue Grosbeak, ad Baltimore Oriole. A Horned Grebe was a good find as a late bird, and the Great Blue Heron rookery at Ecusta Pond continues to grow.

Michael Plauché

Pisgah Ridge, Great Balsam and Plott Balsam Mountains IBA – count dates spanned from May 16-21 with teams selecting one of those days to do their section, 81 species, 3035 individuals, 22 participants in 12 parties, 67.25 party-hours. Elevation ranges for this count run from 3500 to 6100 feet. Weather: Excellent over most of the count period with one morning of intermittent rain. Temperature 45-75°F.

Compiler: Marilyn Westphal (mjwestph@ret.unca.edu)

Participants: Tim Carstens, Nancy Casey, Robert Emmott, Tom Flagg, Robert Johnson, Stacy Johnson, Gail Lankford, Charlie Lankford, Jeff Lemons, Marianne Mooney, Nora Murdock, Naomi Otterness, Catherine Reid, Russell Roe, Joe Sasfy, Steve Semanchuk, Marcus Simpson, Liz Skiles, Lou Weber, Marilyn Westphal, Connie Wulcowicz and Stan Wulcowicz

Exclusives: None

Notes: We had some unusually fine weather throughout the count period, which made for great fun birding in this beautiful area. Unlike last year's cold and wet spring, this spring returned to normal weather conditions and normal migration arrival dates. This count has been conducted since 2006 and since the date for the count is relatively late in May for most migrants and the count period is always over the third weekend in May, the total species show little variation from one year to the next and this year was no different. Average total species is 80 and this year it was 81. Average total individual birds is 3078, and this year the total was 3035. The number of participants (22) and party-hours (67.25) was also average.

Although the total number of species was average, there are always some surprises. This year there a few late migrants were seen including Bay-breasted, Blackpoll and Palm as well as a Cerulean Warbler, which may or may not have been a late migrant. Yellow-rumped Warblers also continued to be present and singing along Black Balsam Road as they have for several years in a row now. Another big surprise was a Northern Bobwhite in the Mount Pisgah area. Notable absences were Pine Siskin, which have been scarce in the area this year, and Red Crossbill, which arrived unusually late this year and after the count period.

There were also a few record high and low counts for some species. Anecdotal evidence of large numbers of Canada Warblers in the area this year proved to be true on the count with a total of 177 compared to the average of 120. Black-throated Green and Black-throated Blue Warbler and Common Yellowthroat numbers were also at records of 204, 147 and 68. Other species with record highs included Red-eyed Vireo (150) and Northern Parula (45) (one wonders if these species may be expanding their elevational range), and Least Flycatcher with a surprising 52 compared to the average 22.

Anecdotal evidence of abnormally low numbers of American Robins in this area also proved to be the case with only 106 compared to the average of 149. One of the most surprisingly absent bird was Ruffed Grouse with only one found compared to the average six. Fewer chickadees were also found with only a total of 30 compared to the average 59. It is always difficult to label many of these chickadees as Black-capped, Carolina or hybrid as many, if not most, sing the Black-capped song and often look more like Black-capped than Carolina. The most surprising low numbers were for Dark-eyed Junco with only 209 found compared to the average 325.

Once again the most abundant species found was Chestnut-sided Warbler (329) followed by Dark-eyed Junco (209), Black-throated Green Warbler (204), Eastern Towhee (181), Canada Warbler (177), Blue-headed Vireo (170), Red-eyed Vireo (150), Black-throated Blue Warbler (147), Veery (134), and Golden-crowned Kinglet (124).

Thanks again to all the participants who make this Important Bird Area count possible. Thirty, forty, or fifty years from now, considering our changing climate, these data could provide some important comparisons.
Marilyn Westphal

Henderson County – count date period from May 9th to May 14th (teams select which date to do their count), 103 species, 2218 individuals, 17 participants in eight areas, 34.25 party-hours. Weather: Variable during count period.

Compiler: Jim Neal (jlbjneal@gmail.com)

Participants**:** Vickie Burke, Doug Carle, Muriel Carle, Robert Emmott, Liz Fitts, Liz Honnold, Richard Jackson, Mike Judd, Barbara Neal, Jim Neal, Nora Murdock, Carol Palmer, Don Palmer, Cherie Pittillo, Marcia Poyor, Marcus Simpson, and Marilyn Westphal

Exclusives: None

Notes: The 2019 Spring Migration Count for Henderson County was conducted over a 6-day period. The 103 species found is at the midpoint between our lowest count of 95 in 2015 and highest count of 120 in 2006. The 2218 individuals are below the midpoint of a low of 1612 in 2014 and a high of 3904 in 2012.

There were only four species with totals greater than 100 individuals. They included European Starling (131), Eastern Towhee (122), Northern Cardinal (104), and Cliff Swallow (103). There was a misunderstanding regarding coverage of Jackson Park, so the area was not covered this year for the first time in the 22 history of this count. This might have reduced both the number of species and total birds as Jackson Park often produces some species not found in other areas.

There were eighteen species of warbler found, which was just below our normal of 20. Other really good birds included Double-crested Cormorant, Bald Eagle, Semipalmated Plover, Solitary Sandpiper, Spotted Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Barred Owl, Acadian Flycatcher, Alder Flycatcher, Willow Flycatcher, Great-crested Flycatcher, Yellow-throated Vireo, Fish Crow, Blue Grosbeak, and Bobolink.

Thanks to all those who helped with the count for an excellent job.

Jim Neal

Buncombe County – Count period ran May 10-13 with each group selecting the day it could do their section, 108 species, 4131 individuals, 22 participants in 10 parties, 60.32 party-hours. Weather: Variable over count period, cloudy, foggy, cool and windy to mostly sunny and relatively calm and cool.

Compiler: Tom Tribble (tntribble@gmail.com)

Participants: Nancy Casey, Nancy Cowal, Robert Emmott, K. Hillegas, K. Johnson, Doug Johnston, Gail Lankford, Herman Lankford, D. Liberatori, R. Liberatori, Nora Murdock, Janie Owens, Liz Payne, Kitti Reynolds, Russell Roe, Steve Semanchuk, Marcus Simpson, Liz Skiles, Tom Tribble, Marilyn Westphal, Jay Wherley, and Steve Yurkovich

Exclusives: None

Notes: None

Black Mountains IBA – Count period ran from May 23-28 with teams selecting one of those days to complete their section, 62 species, 1787 individuals, 16 participants in 12 parties with some teams covering a second section on a different day, 50.01 party-hours. Weather: Mostly pleasant conditions although quite foggy some mornings and often overcast. Temperature 40-75° F. Elevation range for this count is 3000 to 6684 feet with most of the count area above 4000 feet. This count has been conducted since 2006 with 2008 missed because of road closures.

Compiler: Marilyn Westphal (mjwestph@ret.unca.edu)

Participants: Robert Emmott, MaryEllen Flowers, Tedd Greenwald, Jamie Harrelson, Chris Jaquette, Bob Knight, Charlie Lankford, Gail Lankford, Nora Murdock,

Michael Plauché, Debbie Segal, Steve Semanchuk, Marcus Simpson, Liz Skiles, Simon Thompson, and Marilyn Westphal

Exclusives: Red Crossbill

Notes: Weather was favorable this year, so all teams were able to complete their sections with relative ease. However, two areas usually covered, Forest Roads 472 and 2074, were closed and were only partially covered. Total species (62) was one above average, and total birds (1787) was only slightly higher than the average 1734, but lower than the previous three years, probably because the forest roads weren't covered.

There were a couple of surprises on the count including a Swainson's Warbler, both heard and seen, in the Toe River watershed, a first for Yancey County during the breeding season. Although this species is fairly common on the other side of the high ridge in the Catawba River watershed, it has never been found breeding on the other side of the divide in this area, so if it does breed in this area it would be a range extension. Another surprise was a Swainson's Thrush along the Bald Knob Ridge trail. Swainson's Thrushes had been found in the Black Mountains during the breeding season for several years, but the population dwindled and they had not been found the last couple of years. Perhaps this was a late migrant, or possibly a remnant of the former population.

There were a couple of high-count records for the count including 101 Blackburnian Warblers (average is 62), and 78 Winter Wrens (average is 56). A record low 135 Dark-eyed Juncos were counted (average 216). A record low number was also found on the Pisgah/Balsam Mountains count along the Parkway south of Asheville. The reason for the unusually low numbers of Juncos this year in the southern mountains is unknown. Most abundant species found on the count were Black-throated Green Warbler (187), Golden-crowned Kinglet (145), Dark-eyed Junco (135), Blue-headed Vireo (131), Blackburnian Warbler (101), Canada Warbler (90), Winter Wren (78), Black-throated Blue Warbler (76), Veery (71), and Red-breasted Nuthatch (60).

Although one or two Alder Flycatchers are usually found in this area, there were four this year all in different locations. Also, although Pine Siskins and Red Crossbills were notably absent from the Pisgah/Balsam Mountains count a week earlier, they were present in good numbers on this count with 20 Pine Siskins and 27 Red Crossbills. Pine Siskins are fairly reliably present every year here, but Red Crossbills are always unpredictable and this year they returned shortly before the count period, which was much later than usual. Yellow-rumped Warblers were also present once again this year as they have been for the past several years during the breeding season.

Thanks again to all the participants. This can be a challenging area to cover because of unpredictable weather and sometimes steep and rocky trails, so their efforts are always greatly appreciated.

Marilyn Westphal

Grandfather Mountain – Count date May 17th, 56 species, 498 individuals, six participants in four parties, 17.25 party-hours. Weather: Mostly cloudy and breezy with winds gusting to 40 mph at higher elevations. Temperature in the mid 50's to mid-60's.

Compiler: Amy Renfranz (amy@grandfather.com)

Participants: Bob Cherry, Amy Renfranz, Judi Sawyer, Emily Treadwell and two others.

Exclusives: Greater Scaup

Notes: The Grandfather Spring Bird Count began in May 2011. This represents the eighth year of the count as the weather prohibited the count in 2017. This year the weather was breezy, but cooperative at lower elevation sites. Birding was completed by ear and sight at these sites. However, wind speeds along the Grandfather Trail were consistently in the mid 40-45 mph, and I was unable to hear song over the noise of the wind.

Previous counts had about six participants to cover four routes. In 2018 we had 10 participants involved in the count to cover five routes. In 2019, as a result of unforeseen circumstances, two of our typical route leaders were unable to participate. We had to revert to six participants covering four routes. Route leaders included Judi Sawyer, Bob Cherry, and me. Although I was happy to help under the circumstances, I am an amateur at best. Unfortunately it is reflected in the numbers, as there were certainly birds that were present, but I that was unable to identify.

Time spent on each route varied. Over seven hours were committed to the Profile Trail, while 6.25 hours were spent on the Blue Ridge Parkway. Far fewer hours were spent on the Grandfather Trail and 105 Corridor. This was a shift from previous years when seven plus hours were spent in those two areas alone.

We collectively logged 17.25 hours on this year's count versus the count average of 33.90 hours for the years 2011 to 2018. This marked the lowest recorded species abundance since the count began in 2011 with just 56 species. The high count of 77 was achieved in 2012 (90 party-hours), and the lowest count until this year was 61 in 2016 (15.5 party-hours).

Three new species were counted this year including Pied-billed Grebe, Black-billed Cuckoo, and Greater Scaup. The two Black-billed Cuckoos were particularly exciting to find by Blue Ridge Parkway birders. They noted: "We did not get photos of the Black-billed Cuckoos, but did get good looks at one from 50 feet. Bird was first seen when it was about 30 feet from us and was flying into crown of a tree. I noticed the long tail, dark back, and white belly. Bird flew to another tree about 50 feet from us and was perched on a branch slightly above eye level. We both had good looks at the bill in good lighting and neither of us saw any yellow on the bill. The bird was dark on back and on the head from the eye up. Light on belly/chest and on face below eye. Only had fleeting glimpses of the tail, but did not notice white spots. Both birds flew to another tree about 70 feet away and we could tell they were cuckoos from the overall color, long bill, and long tail. A few seconds later we heard three cuckoo calls that were repeated about 30 seconds later."

A pair of Bald Eagles successfully nested along the Highway 105 Corridor. This highway runs parallel to the Watauga River. Since 2017 a breeding pair of Bald Eagles used a nesting site near the Hound Ears Country Club on Shull's Mill Road and other eagles have been spotted in the same vicinity. The adult birds were not seen, however the two juveniles were observed jumping from branch to branch around their nest.

Many of our numbers were affected this year by the decreased participation and lack of expertise. Significant decreases were seen in the number of Mourning Doves, Red-eyed Vireos, and Dark-eyed Juncos. Hopefully, we will be back on track in 2020!

Amy Refranz

Watauga County – Count date May 4th, 102 species, 1965 individuals, 20 participants in 13 teams, 50.40 party-hours. Weather: Mostly cloudy, afternoon thunderstorms, mild to warm temperatures.

Compiler: Guy McGrane (badgerboy@wilkes.net)

Participants: Meredith Boothe, Carol Burdick, Anita Clemmer, Martha Cutler, Ricky Davis, Kimberlie Dewey, Steve Dowlan, Margaret Dunson, Pat Geiger, Merrill Lynch, Guy McGrane, Betsy Murrelle, Janet Paulette, Richard Paulette, Will Pratt, Debbie Shetterly, Jimmie Shetterly, Riley Visser, Janie Wey, Evan Wunder.

Exclusives: Bufflehead, Golden-winged Warbler, Tennessee Warbler

Notes: Good finds were a Tennessee Warbler, tough to find in spring; a Black-billed Cuckoo at Chestnut Knob; three White-eyed Vireos that can be elusive in the mountains; and a couple Great-crested Flycatchers which come through sparingly in spring and rarely stick around long when they do; and a very high count of 64 Red-eyed Vireos.

Missed were the Bald Eagles we know are nesting at River Pointe; most any waterfowl (other than Canada Geese, Mallards, Wood Duck, and a single Bufflehead) as we missed our lake coverage, any kinglets, Swainson's Thrush which often can be found in May, and most any migrating warblers besides the Tennessee and a very few Yellow-rumps. We had just 17 warbler species this year compared to 23 last year.

Guy McGrane

Hanging Rock State Park IBA – Count date May 8th, 102 species 1079 individuals, ten participants in five parties, 21.00 party-hours. Elevation range 1200-2400 feet. Weather: Clear, dry, temperature 62-71ºF.

Compiler: Jean Chamberlain (jchamberlain1@windstream.net)

Participants: Brian Bockhahn, Jean Chamberlain, Kerry Eckhardt, Allison Gagnon, Ron Morris, Virginia Perry, Sue Rupp, Nancy Russo, Cara Woods, and Tony Woods.

Exclusives: None

Notes: None

Piedmont

Iredell County – count date April 28th, 90 species, 1623 individuals, 10 participants in three parties, 27.00 party-hours. Weather: Partly cloudy, wind calm, temperature ranged from 58-82°F. Count circle is centered on the South Yadkin River Bridge on Chipley Ford Road in northern Iredell County.

Compiler: Ron Underwood (rongto@gmail.com)

Participants: Debbie Birnley, Evie Caldwell, Cynthia Dickerson, Bill English, Larry Marlin, Caroline Martin, Janice Powell, Garnet Underwood, Ron Underwood and Mark Whitaker

Exclusives: None

Notes: none

Mecklenburg County – Count date April 27th, 132 species, 6497 individuals, 40 participants, 99.42 party-hours. Weather: Sunny with light winds.

Compiler: Jeff Lemons (birdsalot@gmail.com)

Participants: Chris Bolling, Diane Coggin, Steve Coggin, Wayne Covington, Jennifer Daggy, Jan Fowler, Phil Fowler, Noreen George, Jim Guyton, Chris Hanna, John Hanna, Greg Hays, Katherine Higgins, Christy Hill, Matt Janson, Dennis Kent, Ken Kneidel, Sandy Arthur Kohn, Dennis Lankford, Jeff Lemons, Joclyn McLaughlin, Rich McCracken, Christine McCluskey, Kevin Metcalf, Martina Nordstrand, Shannon O'Connor, Suzanne O'Donoghue, Elle O'Neill, Taylor Piephoff, Lucy Quintilliano, Tammy Sanders, Tom Sanders, John Scavetto, Jill Shoemaker, Lisbeth Stockman, Steve Tracy, Rob VanEpps, Judy Walker, Bob Wood, and Rachel Wood.

Exclusives: Green-winged Teal, Lesser Scaup, American Coot, Wilson's Snipe

Notes: The Charlotte/Mecklenburg Spring Bird Count was held on Saturday, April 27th with 38 participants in thirteen groups and 116 eBird checklists submitted reporting 132 species on count day. The ten-year species average is 130. The weather was nice with mainly sunny skies and light winds. The evening before count day a strong, fast moving storm blew through the area. Participants thought some of the birds that had been around a few days before the count seemed to have moved, with notable decrease in species diversity at locations like Latta Park.

Notable birds for the count included some late waterfowl including Gadwall, Green-winged Teal and Lesser Scaup. Chuck-will's-widow continue to hold on along Dixie River Road with three birds calling before sunrise. A late Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was reported. Caspian Tern was seen along the river for the first time in three years, but no gulls were reported for the second year in a row. Twenty-one species of warblers (22 with Yellow-breasted Chat) were seen including a Kentucky Warbler at Berryhill NP. This is one more than the average of 21 for this count. One Great Egret and one Marsh Wren were reported. Eurasian-collared Dove was reported for the second year in a row.

Notable misses included Pine Siskin, Red-breasted Nuthatch, and Purple Finch that had been present most of the winter and were being seen with some regularity just a few weeks before the count. Seventeen Pine Siskins were reported from a feeder the day before the count, and one bird returned to the feeder the day after the count. Yellow-crowned Night-Herons were missed at multiple traditional nesting locations for the first time in the last ten years. Blue-winged Warbler, American Pipit and American Woodcock were also missed. Blue-winged Warbler was seen in Latta Park the day after the count for a Count Week bird. Searches were made for Peregrine Falcon and Common Nighthawk downtown, but both were missed for the count.

Thanks to all the counters that helped again this year and for again submitting 100% of the count data into eBird. We have a great group of people for the count and I look forward to doing it again next year.

Jeff Lemons

Pilot Mountain State Park – Count date May 2nd, 105 species, 1361 individuals, 11 participants in 5 teams, 23.50 party-hours. Surry County - Pilot Mountain is the count center. Weather: Temperature 64-84°F, mostly clear and sunny with clouds increasing in the evening.

Compiler: Jesse Anderson (jesse.anderson@ncparks.gov)
Participants: Jesse Anderson, Brian Bockhahn, Jean Chamberlain, Kerry Eckhart, Brent Gearhart, Carol Gearhart, Abby Knepp, Lilly Knepp, Shelley Rutkin, Cara Woods, and Tony Woods.

Exclusives: American White Pelican, Wilson's Warbler

Notes: The best birds of the count were a group of six American White Pelicans (a Surry and Yadkin County record), a continuing Cerulean Warbler, and a female Wilson's Warbler both found and observed well by the group at the mountain, and a Swainson's Warbler found at the river section.

The five most abundant birds for count day were Cliff Swallow (295), Red-eyed Vireo (78), European Starling (63), Northern Cardinal (48), and Barn Swallow (44). An unusually high number of Veeries (14) were found, twelve in the mountain section alone, potentially signifying a fallout the prior night. We collectively found 25 species of warbler on count day.

This year we only found one Chuck-will's-widow, two Common Nighthawks, and one Great Horned Owl. More volunteers would be needed during the nighttime hours to increase diversity of nocturnal species.

Jesse Anderson

Forsyth County – Count date May 4th, 121 species, 4829 individuals, 59 participants, 146.50 party-hours. Weather: Partly cloudy, rain in the evening, temperature 68-83°F.

Compiler: Nathan Gatto (ndgatto72@gmail.com)

Participants: Jesse Anderson, Mary Franklin Blackburn, Kim Brant, Malcolm Brown, Bernie Carr, Tommie Castleman, Jean Chamberlain, Harvey Clodfelter, David Collins, Mike Conway, Carol Cunningham, Doug Demarest, David Disher, Susan Disher, Cynthia Donaldson, Kerry Eckhardt, Nathan Gatto, Sarah Gatto, Brent Gearhart, Carol Gearhart, Bill Gifford, Lucy Gifford, John Haire, Roper Halverson, Elaine Hammond, John Hammond, Deirdre Herrington, Wendy Hawkins, Royce Hough, Laura Krebs, Don Lendel, Travis Marceron, Craig McCleary, Jane McCleary, Ana Clara Melo, Chris Meseke, Heather Moir, Ron Morris, Ann Newsome, Sven Newsome, Virginia Perry, Wayne Petel, Laura Phail, Jeremy Reiskind, Rob Rogers, Nancy Russo, Shelly Rutkin, Ann Sargent, John Sargent, Danny Steinhelfer, Philip Steward, Mark Thomas, Chuck Thompson, Cindy Thompson , Katherine Thorington, Jana Trevaskis, Gray Tuttle, Catherine Wanddell, and Jay Wilhelmi

Exclusives: None

Notes: Overall it was an odd spring migration. The weather seemed to work against us. I don't remember having any great days this year. Despite the slow start to spring migration, we were able to find 121 species and 4829 individuals this year.

The best sigthing of the count was a pair of Red-breasted Mergansers on a small pond near Brookberry Farm. Other highlights included several White-crowned Sparrows, Yellow-crowned Night Herons, a Kentucky Warbler, and a group of Bobolinks.

The five most common birds for count day were Northern Cardinal (324), American Robin (261), American Goldfinch (210), Carolina Wren (175), and Barn Swallow (170). Unlike previous years, European Starlings did not make the top five for numbers (sixth

place with 168). We had low numbers of warblers this year, but collectively found 22 species on count day.

This year we only found one Chuck-will's-widow, a few Common Nighthawks, and we missed Eastern Whip-poor-will. I hope this family of birds starts doing better in our region. Other misses were Double-crested Cormorant and Eastern Screech-Owl.

For the count week, which is three days before and after count day, we added a few other species including Double-crested Cormorant, Red-headed Woodpecker, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Blue-winged Warbler, Blue-winged Teal, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Swamp Sparrow, and Pine Siskin.

Thanks to all of the participants that helped with the count this year! We would also like to thank Nancy and Lucia for hosting the count dinner.

Nathan Gatto

Rockingham County – Count date May 1st, 114 species, 2109 individuals, six participants in four parties, 34.25 party-hours. Weather: Clear skies, temperature 55-83°F.

Compiler: Brian Bockhahn (birdranger248@gmail.com)

Participants: Penny Barham, Brian Bockhahn, David Pennebaker, Martin Wall, Cara Woods, and Tony Woods.

Exclusives: None

Notes: The seventh Rockingham County Spring Bird Count was held on Wednesday May 1, 2019 under clear skies and temperatures from 55-83°F. Six observers in four parties tallied our third highest total with 114 species (average 110) and 2109 birds (average 1808). Totals were led by 112 Red-eyed Vireos, 95 Canada Geese and 85 European Starlings. Additional bird seen during count week included Green Heron, Greater Yellowlegs, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Yellow, Blackburnian, Chestnut-sided and Worm-eating Warblers.

First count records: Two Red-breasted Nuthatches were reported in the Anglin Mill section, a good place for a lingering migrant. Another long awaited first was a Bald Eagle seen along the Mayo River by Avalon Dam.

Second count records: Least Sandpiper from Stoneville section, American Bittern dawn flyover at Mayo River Road, Warbling Vireo at Mayo Mountain access, Horned Lark on Mayo River Road, three Bobolinks in the Dan River/Airport region, and 5 Pine Siskins in the Anglin Mill section.

Misses: Sharp-shinned Hawk (3rd miss), Great Horned Owl (3rd) and Belted Kingfisher (3rd miss).

Many thanks to everyone who volunteered to count!

Brian Bockhahn

Greensboro – Count date April 28th, 114 species, 5920 individuals, 30 participants, 85.00 party-hours. Weather: A very pleasant day, temperature 45-75°F, light westerly winds, no rain.

Compiler: Elizabeth Link (elzlink@yahoo.com)

Participants: Nancy Adamson, Carolyn Allen, Lynn Allison, Frank Cashwell, Sue Cole, Scott DePue, Jim Eldrett, Lynne Gray, Chris Groh, Mary Hankins, Megan Hankins, Elizabeth Link, Henry Link, Clarence Mattocks, Scott Mortenson, Lynn Moseley, Jean

Murdick, Roberta Newton, Lane Oldham, Sandy Post, Wallace Sills, Lou Skrabec, Melanie Stadler, Emily Talbert, Emily Tyler, Ann VanSant, Marty Wall, Ann Walter-Fromson, Matt Wangarin, and Melissa Whitmire.

Exclusives: None

Notes: The Spring Bird Count for Greensboro was held on Saturday, April 28th. In a spring with a lot of rain we lucked out on the weather. A total of 114 species were counted with an additional 13 species found during the count week.

Out of the last 35 years, there have been only two other years when we had 114 or fewer species, and only seven years when we had fewer than 120 species. During that same 35-year period there were only seven years when we had fewer individual birds than on this year's count. Our average individual count for that period is 7212.

Notable absences included a number of warbler species including Chestnut-sided, Magnolia and Blackpoll Warblers, found on count week, and others such as Canada and Yellow Warbler, which are usually seen, weren't found at all during the count period. This is only the third time since 1967 that we haven't found Yellow Warbler on the count. Waterfowl were also missing, as they had largely left the area before the count. Among the few species seen were two Gadwall, which we have had on only one other count since 1967.

On the other hand, there were several Red-breasted Nuthatches on count day, something that has only happened on six other counts in the last 35 years.

Many thanks to the counters who gave their time to help continue to gather data for the spring migration.

Elizabeth Link

Chapel Hill – count date May 12th, 109 species, 6576 individuals, 29 field observers in 15 teams and one feeder watcher, 97.10 party hours. Weather: Low 66°F, high 75°F; wind SW 10-15 mph; cloudy, no rain.

Compiler: Will Cook (cwcook@duke.edu)

Participants: David Anderson, Brian Bockhahn, Norm Budnitz, Jim Capel, Fleeta Chauvigne, Will Cook, Maria de Bruyn, Nan DeWire, Judith Ferster, Kent Fiala, Jill Froning, Susan Gaca, Steve Graves, Gene Kingsley, David Murdock, Candace Owens, Marc Ribaudo, Suzanne Roberts, Linda Robinson, Margaret Scott, Roger Shaw, David Smith, Judy Smith, Richard Snow, Andy Sullivan, Shelley Theye, Ginger Travis, and Bruce Young

Exclusives: None

Notes: The Chapel Hill spring count on Sunday, May 12, 2019, recorded a very low 109 species, our lowest in 45 years! The weather was cloudy, which is normally good for a count, but also very windy all day, which may have kept the birds down and made it more difficult for counters to hear singing birds.

This year's species total of 109 is 11 below the 10-year average of 120. This is the lowest since 1974, before the filling of Jordan Lake, when we also had 109 species. The total number of birds, 6576, is well below the average of 7947. Effort on the count was also quite low, with 97.1 party hours (average 121.5). However, the number of birds per party hour, 67.7, is surprisingly close to the average of 65.7. Perhaps the low count was

more related to fewer teams of birders counting, though the wind certainly did not help and prevented boat-accessible areas from being counted.

We found no rare birds on this count, for the first time in many years. Some less common goodies included Great Egret at Sandy Creek Park in Durham (Kent Fiala's team), Sharp-shinned Hawk (Steve Graves's team), Blue-winged Warbler (Jill Froning), Black-throated Green Warbler (Will Cook), Bobolink (Roger Shaw), Baltimore Oriole (Brian Bockhahn), and lingering Pine Siskins (Norm Budnitz's team and Will Cook).

There were no record highs, but we did have "good" numbers of one species: European Starling (232, average 160, highest since 2005).

We had three big misses - Belted Kingfisher (first miss ever in the 63-year history of the count), Blackpoll Warbler (first miss since 2000), and White-throated Sparrow (second miss, first miss was last year). We also set a record low for Wood Thrush, 30 (average is 51), which has been in a steep decline for the past decade. Other lowlights: Hairy Woodpecker (7, average 11, lowest since 1996), Tufted Titmouse (280, average 347, lowest since 1999), Ovenbird (56, average 105, lowest since 1996), Black-and-white Warbler (3, average 20, lowest since 1971), Common Yellowthroat (56, average 100, second lowest since 1969), Northern Parula (68, average 93, lowest since 2000), and Field Sparrow (6, average 12).

Team honors: Brian Bockhahn and Bruce Young both had 79 species in separate areas at Jordan Lake. Roger Shaw, covering the Dairyland Road area, counted the most individual birds, with 645.

We had 29 field counters in 15 parties (average 39 in 19 parties), with 1 feeder watcher. Thanks to all counters for their efforts, despite the less-than-stellar day!
Charles W. "Will" Cook

Jordan Lake – Count date May 5th, 117 species, 8472 individuals, 45 participants in 23 parties, 122.35 party-hours. Weather: Mild with temperatures ranging from 66°F in the morning to 75°F in the afternoon. Winds calm to light and variable, sky overcast in the morning and partly cloudy in the afternoon with intermittent scattered showers throughout the day.

Compiler: Norm Budnitz (nbudnitz@gmail.com)

Participants: Steve Backus, Patsy Bailey, Barbara Beaman, Elizabeth Bishop, Todd Bishop, Brian Bockhahn, Norman Budnitz, Sebastian Burgess, Chris Canfield, Jonathan Cantrell, Jim Capel, Barbara Coffman, Patrick Coin, Will Cook, Mike DeMatties, Joe Donahue, Tom Driscoll, Sam Flake, Loren Hintz, Bo Howes, Allen Hurlbert, Elizabeth Keating, Gene Kingsley, Kerry MacPherson, Jennifer Maher, Frank McKeever, Steve McMurray, Mark Owens, Jill Paul, Rick Payne, Marc Ribaudo, Tommy Richey, Kathleen Rogers, Beverly Scalise, Roger Shaw, Josh Southern, Sterling Southern, Jenny Stanley, Pam Timmons, Andy Upshaw, Margaret Vimmerstedt, Catherine Ward, Fleeta Wilkinson, Rouse Wilson, and Joe Zellers.

Exclusives: Hooded Merganser

Notes: Forty-six observers in 23 parties participated (our 10-year averages are 45 observers in 21 parties). We tallied 8472 individual birds (average 8007) and 117 species (average 120) in 122 party hours (average 122).

Although we recorded most of the usual suspects, we did miss several species that we normally expect to see including Green Heron, Bonaparte's Gull, Palm Warbler, Swamp Sparrow, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and Bobolink. We found very few waterfowl (ducks) and very few passage migrants (Neotropical migrants that pass through our area, but don't stop to breed here). For example, we had the usual cast of our breeding warblers including Ovenbird, Northern Parula, Yellow-throated Warbler, etc., but no Bay-breasted or Cape May Warblers, and only one Blackpoll Warbler. Even Black-throated Blue Warblers were half the usual number. It's hard to say if there is any significance to that conservation-wise, or whether it was just a matter of timing in that we simply counted on a day when those birds were not on the move through our area. I prefer to think it was the latter, but worry that it might have been the former. We had a similar situation last year.

We did have several new record high counts. We reported:

- 89 Rock Pigeons (our previous high was 71 in 1995)
- 88 Eastern Phoebes (73 in 1993)
- 130 Fish Crows (64 in 2015)
- 299 Chipping Sparrows (282 in 2012)
- 69 Ospreys (ties our previous high count of 69 in 2012)

The Ospreys, of course, are doing well at Jordan Lake. The other species are all ones that generally do well in habitats created by humans.

Our parties did turn up a few species that are unusual on our spring counts:

- Hooded Merganser: one found by Brian Bockhahn
- Ruddy Duck: one found by Norm Budnitz, Allen Hurlbert, and Pam Timmons
- American Bittern: one found by Brian Bockhahn
- Mississippi Kites: one found by Joe Donahue and Bo Howes, and one found by Mark Owens, Andy Upshaw, Rouse Wilson, and Joe Zellers
- Common Raven: one found by Norm Budnitz, Allen Hurlbert, and Pam Timmons (This species may become more regular. It was found near a rock quarry in the Moncure area and has been seen on several recent counts.)
- Pine Siskins: three found by Jennifer Maher and Roger Shaw, four found by Frank McKeever, Kathleen Rogers, and Beverly Scalise

Brian Bockhahn reported 82 species of birds in the Vista Point area, while Will Cook found 75 species in the eastern part of the Harris Lake area.

If you would like to see a spreadsheet of this count and a cumulative spreadsheet of all our counts, please visit the Bird Counts page on the New Hope Audubon website at: http://www.newhopeaudubon.org/get-outdoors/bird-counts/

Norm Budnitz

Durham – Count date April 28th, 113 species, 2296 individuals, 10 participants in six parties, one feeder watcher, 32.60 party-hours. Weather: Partly cloudy skies, light winds, spotty showers all morning, temperature 54°-75°F.

Compiler: Brian Bockhahn (birdranger248@gmail.com)

Participants: Patsey Bailey, Brian Bockhahn, Norm Budnitz, Tom Driscoll, Elizabeth Keating, Gene Kingsley, Thomas Krakauer, Marcia Mandel, Roger Shaw, and Deck Stapleton.

Exclusives: None

Notes: The Durham Spring Bird Count was held on Sunday April 28, 2019 under partly cloudy skies, light winds, spotty showers all morning and mild temperatures 54-75. Ten observers in six parties and one at feeder tallied 113 species (average 112) and 2296 total birds (average 3578) led by 143 Northern Cardinal, 109 Double-crested Cormorant and 99 Blue-gray Gnatcatchers.

Highlights were many, including two species not on our checklist, a pair of Cape May Warblers seen and photographed at Flat River, and a single Pine Siskin at a feeder in Croasdaile, way to go Tom!

Not seen in the last ten counts: one Red-breasted Merganser south of Hickory Hill, one Little Blue Heron at Patterson Place Wetland, one Yellow-crowned Night-Heron dawn flyover along Panther Creek, Broad-winged Hawk at Duke Forest, Greater Yellowlegs at Patterson Place Wetland, Chuck-wills-widow on Falls Lake Game Lands.

Other goodies include ten American Bitterns at Flat River and Brickhouse Road, Herring Gull at Hickory Hill, two American Woodcock at Flat River, one Rose-breasted Grosbeak at Hickory Hill and one Baltimore Oriole at Flat River.

Misses: Misses were somewhat disturbing and all first time "A-list" species: Rock Pigeon, Black-throated Green Warbler, American Redstart, Kentucky Warbler, Savannah and Grasshopper Sparrow!

Many thanks to everyone who volunteered to count!

Brian Bockhahn

Falls Lake – Count date April 29th, 116 species, 3338 individuals, 15 participants in nine parties, 49.95 party-hours. Weather: Cloudy skies, light wind, mild temperature 54-67°F.

Compiler: Brian Bockhahn (birdranger248@gmail.com)

Participants: Herb Amyx, Pat Amyx, Brian Bockhahn, Norm Budnitz, Sebastian Burgess, Amy Corbally, Edward Landis, Done Pelly, A. Roach, Deborah Robertson, Jeri Smart, Josh Southern, Deck Stapleton, Patty Tice, and M. Walker.

Exclusives: None

Notes: The 16th Falls Lake Spring Bird Count was held on April 29, 2019 under cloudy skies, light wind and mild temperatures ranging from 54-67° F. Fifteen observers in nine parties tallied 116 species (average 113) and 3338 total birds (average 3894).
Most numerous birds were again Cliff Swallow at 292, 150 Northern Cardinal and 134 Chipping Sparrow.

First Records: Having a major fallout this season, two parties found Cape May Warbler along the Mountains to Sea Trail (MST) near Yorkshire and at Sandling Beach. A count week Cerulean Warbler was seen during the Blue Jay Point Songbird Festival.

Other Goodies: Our second Merlin at area 18 MST, a flock of five Least Sandpipers

at Sandling Beach, two parties with Veery at Durant Nature Park and the MST in area 18, which also had a single second count record Purple Finch and a Baltimore Oriole! A Chestnut-sided Warbler was seen at the north end of Beaverdam Lake section, and three parties found Pine Siskin.

Misses: Nothing off "A-list" but we missed Great Egret, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Screech and Great Horned Owl, all the goatsuckers, Acadian Flycatcher, Ruby-crowned Kinglet and Cedar Waxwing.

Many thanks to everyone who volunteered to count!

Brian Bockhahn

Kerr Lake – Count date April 30th, 118 species, 3767 individuals, 12 participants in seven parties, 50.10 party-hours. Weather: Clear skies, temperatures (52°-84°F).

Compiler: Brian Bockhahn (birdranger248@gmail.com)

Participants: Jeff Blalock, Brian Bockhahn, Ann Brice, Adam D'Onofrio, Jackie Evrard, Mark Evrard, Paul Glass, Fred Lobdell, Grace McCrowell, Evan Spears, Deck Stapleton, and A. Williford.

Exclusives: Red-throated Loon

Notes: The 16th Kerr Lake Spring Bird Count was held on April 30, 2019 under clear skies and mild temperatures 52-84° F. Twelve observers in seven parties tallied 118 species (average 118) and 3767 birds (average 3875) led by 485 Double-crested Cormorants, 160 Red-eyed Vireos and 159 Chipping Sparrows.

First Records: A lunch-time flyover Mississippi Kite at North Bend was a nice surprise and may be new to the lake checklist.

Other Goodies: The back page was well marked with Red-breasted Merganser at Eagle Point; breeding plumage Red-throated Loon (fourth) and Horned Grebe (fifth) above the dam; Green Heron at Dick Cross; Merlin (fourth) and American Woodcock (fourth) at Eagle Point; Bullocksville and Henderson Point each had a single late Hermit Thrush (third); Eagle Point and Dick Cross each had a single Veery; 18 Bobolinks were near Bullocksville; and three late Pine Siskins were found at Satterwhite.

Misses: Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawk, Caspian Tern, Northern Flicker (first miss), House Wren, Cedar Waxwing, Black-throated Green Warbler and Palm Warbler. Song Sparrow was not among the seven sparrow species we had! We put in 42 hours and 17 miles by foot, eight hours and 90 miles by car and 2.75 hours and three miles owling.

Many thanks to everyone who volunteered to count!

Brian Bockhahn

Raven Rock State Park – Count date April 27th, 117 species, 3900 individuals, 18 participants in 11 parties, 68.25 party-hours. Weather: Sunny, wind SW 3-12mph, temperature 46-79° F. Count circle center at junction of NC210 and SR 1434.

Compiler: Erik R. Thomas (erthomas@ncsu.edu)

Participants: John Bartlett, Charles Byrd, Peter Cashwell, Lisa Cook, Michael Fisk, Molly Fullwood, Paul Hart, Tom Howard, Prudence Mainor, Tim McGreal, Jeff Mielke,

Richard Mielke, Jeannine Rease, Mitch Rease, Mary Stevens, Sarah Stevens, Erik Thomas, and Amber Williams.

Exclusives: Orange-crowned Warbler

Notes: Our total of 117 species was an improvement over the past three years' counts, although our count of 3900 individuals was the lowest in many years. Our biggest misses were probably Great Horned Owl and Kentucky Warbler, but three other species that have been fairly regular for stretches of years in the past, Eurasian Collared Dove, Anhinga, and Grasshopper Sparrow, also failed to appear. Among the highlights were a Mississippi Kite by Amber Williams and Prudence Mainor, a Baltimore Oriole by Tom Howard and Chuck Byrd, two Swainson's Warblers by Michael Fisk, two Northern Bobwhites by David Brown, and a late Ruddy Duck by Erik Thomas.

Erik R. Thomas

Coast

Brunswick County – Count date April 28th, 138 species, 6050 individuals, 28 field observers, 47.75 party-hours. Weather: Temperatures ranged from 55 to 79° F with mostly clear to partly cloudy skies; winds from the S to SW at 5-12 mph.

Compiler: Dave Weesner (david.weesner@yahoo.com) and Sam Cooper (dmcooper2@juno.net)

Participants: Jamie Adams, Lynn Eria Beegle, Kathleen Bowman, Richard Cooper, Sam Cooper, Gordon Curlew, Deb Dough, Marjorie Foote, George Harrington, Joan Herrett, Laurie Jelinek, Marjorie Jones, Amanda Kiel, Sherry Lane, Pat MacPherson, Cheryl Manger, Mary Lynn Meissner, Robin Myers, Ann Orsillo, Joanne Parker, Jeanne Pavero, Hugh Shaw, Jeri Smart, Charlie Spencer, Dave Weesner, Lori White, and David Wilson.

Exclusives: Clapper Rail, Common Gallinule, American Oystercatcher, Black-bellied Plover, Wilson's Plover, Whimbrel, Ruddy Turnstone, Red Knot, Sanderling, Dunlin, Western Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher, Willet, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Least Tern, Common Tern, Forster's Tern, Royal Tern, Sandwich Tern, Black Skimmer, Northern Gannet, Anhinga, Brown Pelican, Snowy Egret, Tri-colored Heron, Cattle Egret, Black-crowned Night Heron, White Ibis, Swallow-tailed Kite, Bachman's Sparrow, Boat-tailed Grackle, Painted Bunting

Notes: The 2019 spring count was conducted on 28 April and yielded 138 species and 6050 individuals from the effort of 28 participants. Thanks to the efforts of birders in the St. James area, the count had more participants this year than in the past, but even with more participants there were fewer overall party-hours. Many expected and regularly occurring species were missed, and the results were 20 species less than the previous two years. With more and better coverage the count could certainly yield a much higher species list. Areas covered were primarily in the vicinity of Sunset Beach, Ocean Isle Beach, Oak Island, Southport and St. James area, Governor's Road, EV Henwood, and a portion of the Green Swamp.

Dave Weesner and Sam Cooper

BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

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(All dates Winter 2019-2020, unless otherwise noted)

Briefs for the Files is a seasonal collection of uncommon-to-rare or unusual North and South Carolina bird sightings and events which do not necessarily require a more detailed Field Note or article. Reports of your sightings are due the 20th of the month after the end of the previous season.

Winter	*December 1–February 28*	*due March 20*
Spring	*March 1–May 31*	*due June 20*
Summer	*June 1–July 31*	*due August 20*
Fall	*August 1–November 30*	*due December 20*

Reports may be submitted in any format, but I prefer that you use email, list multiple sightings in taxonomic order (rather than by date or location), and type your report directly into the body of the email. If your sightings are in a file, please copy-and-paste the text into the body of the email, rather than sending an attachment.

Suitable reports for the Briefs include any sightings you feel are unusual, rare, noteworthy, or just plain interesting to you in any way! It is my responsibility to decide which reports merit inclusion in the Briefs.

Please be sure to include details of any rare or hard-to-identify birds.

I rely in part on sightings reported in Carolinabirds. Please don't, however, rely on me to pick up your sightings from Carolinabirds. Instead, please also send your sightings directly to me as described above.

If I feel that your sighting warrants a Field Note, I will contact either you or the appropriate state Field Notes editor. You may, of course, submit your Field Note directly to the editor without going through me.

Abbreviations: **BRC** – Bird Records Committee, **CBC** – Christmas Bird Count, **et al.** – and others, **Ft** – Fort, **m. obs.** – multiple observers, **Mt** – Mount, **NC** – North Carolina, **NWR** – National Wildlife Refuge, **Rd** – Road, **SC** – South Carolina, **SP** – State Park, **WMA** – Wildlife Management Area, **WTP** – Water Treatment Plant

All italicized place names are counties.

Ross's Goose: Sightings were made at about a dozen sites across the region. Eight around exit 548 on US-64 in *Washington* NC 18 Dec (Lucas Bobay) was a good count. Several were seen in the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lake NWR *Hyde* and *Washington* NC intermittently throughout the winter, with a high count of six made 1 Feb (Ed Corey). Individuals around Hendersonville *Henderson* NC 4-15 Dec (Wayne Forsythe, m. obs.), around Owen Park *Buncombe* NC 8-29 Dec (Denise Hargrove, m. obs.), and, possibly the same individual, on Lake Eden *Buncombe* NC 19 Dec through 14 Feb (Steve Yurkovich, m. obs.) were good finds for the mountain region. Individuals photographed on ponds in King *Stokes* NC 5 Dec (Thomas Gray, m. obs.), along Bostick Rd in *Allendale* SC 6 Dec (Cherrie Sneed), and along Buffalo Church Rd in *Cleveland* NC 25 Jan (Bill Hooker) were possible firsts for those counties.

Greater White-fronted Goose: Several flocks were seen at sites around Asheville including three at Biltmore Estate *Buncombe* NC 8-21 Dec (Denise Hargrove, m. obs.), nine at Owen Park *Buncombe* NC 22 Jan through 11 Feb (Alan Lenk, m. obs.), and up to 24 at the Mills River WTP *Henderson* NC 25-28 Jan (m. obs.). Individuals around Mid-Pines Rd in *Wake* NC 26 Nov through 15 Feb (Ray Kimsey, m. obs.), in western Winston Salem *Forsyth* NC 3 Feb through 1 Mar (John Haire, m. obs.), and at Pinewood Lake Park *Richland* SC 8-11 Feb (m. obs.) were locally unusual.

Brant: One at Lake Lynn *Wake* NC 6-8 Dec (Erla Beegle, m. obs.) was very unusual for an inland site. Pending review by the SC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent Brant at Yawkey Wildlife Center *Georgetown* SC 19 Dec (Chris Hill, et al.).
20 at the southern end of the Core Sound near Morgan Island *Carteret* NC 17 Feb (Trevor Sleight) was a notable count for that area.

Cackling Goose with Canada Geese, 11 Feb 2020, Haywood Co, NC. Photo by Jay Wherley

Cackling Goose: Up to twenty were reported along US-64 just east of Creswell, near the border of *Tyrrell* and *Washington* NC, 25 Jan through 27 Feb (m. obs.). Individuals at Old Kernersville Lake Park *Forsyth* NC 9 Jan into spring (Nathaniel Watkins, m. obs.) and on Lake Junaluska *Haywood* NC 11 Jan (Stan & Connie Wulkowicz, Bob Olthoff, Paul Super, m. obs.) were locally unusual. Pending review by the SC BRC is the report of four at the south end of Lake Robinson *Greenville* SC 19 Dec (Michael Robertson, Gary Harbour).

Trumpeter Swan: One was heard calling and then photographed in the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR *Hyde* and *Washington* NC 1 Jan (Martina Nordstrand, Baxter Beamer) and again heard calling there 3 Jan (Erla Beegle, et al.), 6 Jan (Nordstrand, Beamer), 19 Jan (Angie Davis, et al.), and 27 Feb (Steven Howell).

Tundra Swan: Four photographed in a field along Jane Shaw Rd in *Scotland* NC 17 Nov 2019 (Whit Newton) and 120 seen in eastern *Bladen* NC 30 Jan (Ben Nickley, Alexander Worm) were possible firsts for those counties.

Tundra Swan (Bewick's Swan): A Eurasian race bird was seen among Tundra Swans in a field along NC-42 just southeast of Conetoe *Edgecombe* NC 23 Feb (Wayne Hoffman) was almost certainly the same individual seen at that site 2-8 February 2019.

Tundra Swan considered to be of the Bewick's Race. This race nests in the Western Palearctic. 6 Feb 2019, Edgecombe Co, NC. Photo by Michael Cheves

Cinnamon Teal: From the Winter 2019-2020 period, a drake was photographed on a pond in Salter Path *Carteret* NC 15 Jan (Michelle Mulchi). The drake first seen at Santee Coastal Reserve *Charleston* SC 9 Nov remained through 9 Jan (Michael Adams). Another drake was seen along Bennetts Point Rd in *Colleton* SC 19 Jan (Jean Cook Potter, et al.).

Eurasian Wigeon: Two were seen at Mattamuskeet NWR *Hyde* NC 6 Dec (Fleeta Chauvigne, et al.) and 18 Jan (David Anderson, et al.). Individual drakes were seen on North Pond Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC from fall through 17 Feb (m. obs.), on Pungo Lake *Hyde* NC 27 Dec (Ed Corey, Nathan Tarr), at Bear Island WMA *Colleton* SC 29 Dec (Russell & Lacy Johnson), and at Donnelley WMA *Colleton* SC 5 Feb (Peggy Blair) and 9 Feb (m. obs.).

Green-winged Teal: 33,678 at Mattamuskeet NWR *Hyde* NC during its CBC 29 Dec (*fide* Susan Campbell) was an amazing total.

Green-winged Teal (Common Teal): A Eurasian race Green-winged Teal was seen by many on North Pond Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 2 Jan (Martina Nordstrand, Baxter Beamer) into early March.

King Eider: Two hens were seen off Jennette's Pier *Dare* NC 7 Jan (Baxter Beamer, Martina Nordstrand, m. obs.) and 28 Jan through 10 Feb (m. obs.).

Common Eider: Eiders didn't venture as far down the coast as they did last winter. Sightings made in NC included a hen off the Oregon Inlet Fishing Center *Dare* 29 Nov

(Alan MacEachren), a first-winter drake off Coquina Beach *Dare* 8 Dec (Sheila Bremer, m. obs.), up to two at Masonboro Inlet *New Hanover* 9 Dec through 27 Feb (Howard Ferguson, m. obs.), a hen at the Cedar Island Ferry Terminal *Carteret* 1 Jan (Bob Powell), a first-winter drake at the Cedar Island Ferry Terminal 25 Jan and 2 Feb (Steven Howell, m. obs.), and up to four off Jennette's Pier *Dare* throughout the period (m. obs.). One at Murrells Inlet *Georgetown* SC 30 Nov through 12 Dec (Pam Ford, Craig Watson, m. obs.) and 13-16 Jan (Ritch Lilly, m. obs.) was the only sighting made in SC.

Harlequin Duck: Pending review by the SC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent drake Harlequin Duck at Murrells Inlet *Georgetown* SC 4-18 Dec (Steve Rhodes, m. obs.).

Surf Scoters, 8 Dec 2019, Haywood Co, NC. Photo by Jay Wherley

Surf Scoter: 20 on Falls Lake *Durham* NC 19 Dec (Kyle Kittelberger) was an amazing count for an inland site. Six, including an adult drake, on Beaver Lake *Buncombe* NC 8 Dec (Jay Wherley, m. obs.) was a notable count for the mountain region. Individuals at Cane Creek Park *Union* NC 19 Dec (Martina Nordstrand, et al.) and at Bishopville WTP *Lee* SC 29 Feb through 9 Mar (Mac Williams, m. obs.) were also good finds inland.

White-winged Scoter: Individuals on Lake Hickory *Alexander* NC 8-11 Dec (Dwayne Martin) and on Kings Mountain Reservoir *Cleveland* NC 20 Dec (Kade Lockhart) and 21 Dec (Marbry Hopkins) were good finds for those inland sites.

Black Scoter: 1750 in northbound flocks off Oceanana Pier *Carteret* NC 1 Dec (John Fussell) was an impressive count. Two hens on Lake Townsend *Guilford* NC 11 Dec (Ian Davies, m. obs.) were unusual for an inland lake.

Long-tailed Duck: Five, two drakes and three hens, on Lake Townsend *Guilford* NC 7-8 Dec (Henry Link, et al.) and one on Belews Lake *Rockingham* NC 19 Dec (Marty Wall) were notable for the Piedmont. Two hens on Seabrook Island *Charleston* SC 1 Dec (Aija Konrad, et al.) with one continuing there through 15 Dec (m. obs.) was the southernmost sighting made along the coast.

Common Merganser: 840 on the north side of Lake Phelps *Washington* NC 1 Feb (Ed Corey) was a notable count for this traditional wintering site for the species.

Red-breasted Merganser: 739 on Lake Phelps *Washington* NC during the Pettigrew SP CBC 27 Dec (*fide* Ed Corey) was an unusually high count for that lake.

Wild Turkey: A count of 133 in a field along NC-101 near Harlowe *Carteret* NC 10 Feb (Peggy Blair) was indicative of how common the species has become in that area.

Red-necked Grebe: Individuals were seen on Lake Randleman *Randolph* NC 5 Feb (Andrew Thornton) and on Lake Townsend *Guilford* NC 14-16 Feb (Matt Wangerin, m. obs.).

Eared Grebe: Individuals were seen at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access) *Jasper* SC 14 Nov, 27 Nov, and 16 Dec (Robin Armetta, Steve Calver), off Bulls Island Cape Romain NWR *Charleston* SC 17 Dec (David McLean, et al.), and off the beach just west of Cape Point *Dare* NC 19 Feb (Megan Baker, Michael Gosselin).

Western Grebe: Individuals were seen off Bulls Island Cape Romain NWR *Charleston* SC, where photographed, during the Charleston CBC 5 Jan (Starr Hazard, David McLean) and off Jennette's Pier *Dare* NC 22 Feb (Robert Meehan, m. obs.).

White-winged Dove: Individuals were photographed along the entrance road to the Bodie Island Lighthouse *Dare* NC 6 Dec (David & Susan Disher), at a feeder just south of Wilmington *New Hanover* NC 12 Dec (Wanda King), and on Sullivan's Island *Charleston* SC 14-16 Dec (Elizabeth Anderegg).

Mourning Dove: 2000 in agricultural fields around the Greenville WTP *Pitt* NC 4 Jan (Howard Vainright, et al.) was a remarkable count.

Chuck-will's-widow: One seen at the Frisco Campground *Dare* NC during the Cape Hatteras CBC 27 Dec (John Fussell) was a good find for winter.

Swift sp.: Pending review by the SC BRC is the report with photograph of an apparent swift species found in Columbia *Richland* SC 4 Feb (Christina Partin-Jones). Theoretically, a Vaux's Swift would be just as likely as a Chimney Swift in winter.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: Unusual far from the coast in winter was a female visiting a feeder in West Columbia *Lexington* SC throughout the period (Allison Smith), a female in Durham visiting a feeder in Durham *Durham* NC throughout the period (*fide* Susan Campbell), a second-year male visiting a feeder in southern *Mecklenburg* NC 29 Dec through 12 Jan (Natasha Goins) and banded 9 Jan (Susan Campbell), and a first-year male visiting a feeder in northwestern *Union* NC and banded 9 Jan (Campbell). 18+ visiting feeders in a yard in Buxton *Dare* NC throughout the winter (Ann Maddock) was a notable concentration.

Rufous Hummingbird: Visiting feeders this winter was an adult female returning to a yard in Mars Hill *Madison* NC 13 Nov and remaining into winter (Lisa Sears), an adult male in northwestern *Henderson* NC 8 Dec through 19 Jan (Vicky Burke, m. obs.), an adult female in Charlotte *Mecklenburg* NC 19 Dec into January (Carl King) banded 9 Jan (Susan Campbell), a second-year male in southern *Mecklenburg* NC banded 9 Jan (Campbell, Natasha Goins), a second-year female in western *Wake* NC in late January and February (Kerry & Trish MacPherson) banded 25 Jan (Campbell), and a male near Forest Lake *Florence* SC 8-22 Feb (Janet Elvington).

Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird: Birds not identified to species, though most likely Rufous Hummingbirds, visited feeders in Silk Hope *Chatham* NC mid-November into winter (Ursel Staudinger), in *Charleston* SC throughout the winter (Russell & Lacy Johnson), in southern *Buncombe* NC 3 Dec (Vicky Burke), in southern *Mecklenburg* NC in mid-December (Deborah Roy), and in West Columbia *Lexington* SC mid-February into March (*fide* Jerry Griggs).

Yellow Rail: Three were reported in *Dare* NC during the Bodie-Pea Islands CBC 28 Dec—two flushed at the north end of Pea Island NWR (Guy McGrane) and another heard responding to playback (*fide* Al Hooks).

King Rail: One heard calling along the American Tobacco Trail in New Hill *Wake* NC 19 Jan into spring (Eddie Owens, m. obs.) was unusual for the Piedmont in winter.

Virginia Rail: One seen and heard along Howerton Rd in *Guilford* NC 11 Dec into March (Jeffrey Greco, m. obs.) was a possible first for that county.

Sora: One seen at Renaissance Park *Mecklenburg* NC during the Charlotte CBC 28 Dec (Greg Hays, Taylor Piephoff) was a good find for the Piedmont in winter. 17 in the Williston Creek impoundment at North River Preserve *Carteret* NC 5 Jan (John Fussell, et al.) was a notable concentration.

Purple Gallinule: A juvenile bird seen and photographed at Donnelley WMA *Colleton* SC 1 Jan (Pam Ford, Craig Watson) 19 Jan (Elizabeth & Jonathan Anderegg) was unusual for the Carolinas in mid-winter.

Limpkin: Sightings included two continuing at the north end of Goose Creek Reservoir *Berkeley* SC throughout the winter (m. obs.), one at Hidden Cypress Golf Club *Beaufort* SC 28 Dec through 3 Feb (Steven Guy, m. obs.), one at Lake Hickory *Catawba* NC 5 Feb (Nathan Morin), and one on the Yadkin River near High Rock Lake *Rowan* NC 8 Feb (Rena Long). The reports from NC are pending review by the NC BRC.

Sandhill Crane: Some of the higher counts this winter were 39 in a field along NC-33 just east of Whitakers *Edgecombe* NC 1-23 Dec (Ann Brice, m. obs.), 82 in the Bluff Unit of Santee NWR *Clarendon* SC during the Santee NWR CBC 21 Dec (Brad Dalton, Roger Smith), 16 along NC-33 just south of Bethel *Pitt* NC 15 Jan (Mark Alt), 19 in southern *Halifax* NC 18 Jan (Howard Vainright), and 38 at Dobbins Farm *Anderson* SC

12 Feb (Imitaz Haque). A small flock was seen in the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lake NWR *Hyde* and *Washington* NC throughout the period, starting with four on 30 Nov (Ricky Davis), growing to seven 27 Dec (Ed Corey, Nathan Tarr), and then eight 9 Feb (David Schroder). The pair that have wintered around the airport in Beaufort *Carteret* NC in recent years returned 27 Nov (John Fussell), were joined by a third bird 14 Dec (Marty Wall) through 29 Feb (Dawn & Sean Leahy), and remained through 12 Mar (Fussell).

Piping Plover: 40 in *Beaufort* SC during the Lowcountry CBC 14 Dec (*fide* Buddy Campbell) was a record number for that count

Wilson's Plover: 36 in *Beaufort* SC during the Lowcountry CBC 14 Dec (*fide* Buddy Campbell) was a great count for SC in winter, while six on East Shackleford Banks *Carteret* NC 26 Jan (Jamie Adams) was great count for NC in winter.

Long-billed Curlew: Individuals were seen at the mouth of Big Bay Creek in Edisto Beach *Charleston* SC 26 Jan (Matt Johnson) and 8 Feb (Elizabeth & Jonathan Anderegg) and at East Shackleford Banks *Carteret* NC 9 Feb (John Fussell, et al.) and 2 Mar (Steven Howell).

Bar-tailed Godwit: The individual that has wintered on East Shackleford Banks *Carteret* NC since Fall 2016 was seen 24 Jan (Steven Howell) and 11 Mar (Dave Fischer).

Ruddy Turnstone: 468 on Hilton Head Island *Beaufort* SC during its CBC 16 Dec (*fide* Susan Murphy) was the highest count made on any Audubon CBC this year.

Least Sandpiper: 58 at the McAlpine WTP *Mecklenburg* NC during the Charlotte CBC 28 Dec (Baxter Beamer, et al.) was a good count for the Piedmont.

Spotted Sandpiper: Late for sites in the Piedmont were two at Falls Lake *Durham* NC 15 Dec (Brian Bockhahn), one at a pond in *Cleveland* NC 13 Dec (Bill Hooker), one at McAlpine WTP *Mecklenburg* NC 28 Dec (Baxter Beamer, et al.), and one in Columbia *Richland* SC 21 Dec intermittently through 14 Feb (Tre Bray, m. obs.). Individuals just below the dam on High Rock Lake *Rowan* NC 27 Feb (Jeff Souther) and at Dobbins Farm *Anderson* SC 29 Feb (Todd Arcos) may have been early spring migrants.

Red Phalarope: One on Harris Lake *Wake* NC 2 Jan (Duncan Fraser) and 3 Jan (Eddie Owens) was very unusual for an inland site and the first ever reported at an inland site in January.

Wilson's Phalarope: One seen on a pond in the River Dunes subdivision in *Pamlico* NC 7 Dec (Al Gamache) was extremely late.

Great Skua: Individuals were seen on pelagic trips out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 16 Feb, 17 Feb & 23 Feb (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

Dovekie: This small alcid was well-seen on pelagic trips out of Hatteras *Dare* NC in mid-February, with 272 seen 16 Feb and an astounding count of 731 seen on 17 Feb (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.). Also, one or two were seen off Jeannette's Pier *Dare* NC 31 Jan through 22 Feb (m. obs.).

Common Murre: On pelagic trips out of Hatteras *Dare* NC, two were seen 16 Feb and four were seen 23 Feb (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

Razorbill: Razorbills began moving down the Outer Banks in good numbers in late January, with numbers peaking in mid-February. Counts from Jennette's Pier *Dare* NC

included 265 on 31 Jan (Ed Corey), 1000 on 16 Feb (David Fischer), 680 on 18 Feb (Bob Butler, Michael Plauché), and 375 on 23 Feb (Ricky Davis). Good counts were also made on pelagic trips out of Hatteras *Dare* NC in mid-to-late February, with 729 seen 16 Feb, 230 seen 17 Feb, and 408 seen 23 Feb (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).Only a few sightings were made south of *Dare* this winter, including 203 off North Topsail Beach Fishing Pier *Onslow* NC 30 Jan (Caleb Stand) and 64 off Johnnie Mercer's Pier *New Hanover* NC 6 Feb (Jamie Adams).

Black Guillemot: Two reports were made this winter, both pending review by the respective state BRCs—one photographed along the jetty at Murrells Inlet *Georgetown* SC during a Carolina Bird Club field trip 18 Jan (m. obs.) and the other seen off Jeannette's Pier *Dare* NC 9 Feb (Bruce Young, Ricky Davis, m. obs.).

Atlantic Puffin: One was collected by a wildlife rehabilitator after being found ashore away from the ocean in Buxton *Dare* NC in early January (*fide* Brian Patteson). An amazing count of 91 was made on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 16 Feb (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.), providing a new record high count for NC. Interestingly, only three were seen on a pelagic trip the following day, 17 Feb, possibly due to rough seas. 13 were seen on a pelagic trip 23 Feb (Patteson, Sutherland, et al.).

Black-legged Kittiwake: A first-winter bird was photographed on the beach in Kitty Hawk *Dare* NC 3 Dec (Jim Gould).

Black-headed Gull: Four were reported this winter—an adult at Mason Inlet *New Hanover* NC 8 Dec (Roger Shaw) intermittently through 9 Feb (Jamie Adams),
a first-winter bird at Carolina Beach Lake *New Hanover* NC 28 Dec (Wayne Hoffman) through 1 Mar (m. obs.), a first-winter bird photographed at Cape Point *Dare* NC 8 Jan (Megan Baker, Michael Gosselin), and a first-winter bird off Johnnie Mercer's Pier *New Hanover* NC 29 Jan (Adams)

Little Gull: Sightings, all made in February in *Dare* NC, included two adults off Jennette's Pier 9 Feb (Ricky Davis), two adults on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras 16 Feb (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.), and an adult photographed in Hatteras village 21 Feb (Sutherland).

Iceland Gull: About a dozen were reported this winter. Along the NC coast, immature individuals were seen on the beach in Nags Head *Dare* 5 Dec (David & Susan Disher), off Holden Beach *Brunswick* 27 Dec (Maria Smith, David Weber), off Pea Island NWR *Dare* 19 Jan (Rick Payne, m. obs.), at Ft Fisher *New Hanover* 6 Feb (Ann Stinely, m. obs.) and on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* 17 Feb (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.). An adult bird was seen off Jennette's Pier *Dare* NC 25 Jan (Michael Plauché, Noah Reid). At Cape Point *Dare* NC, after a first-winter bird was first seen 1 Jan (Nathan & Sarah Gatto), three immature birds were seen 31 Jan (Kate Sutherland) and 4 Feb (Megan Baker, Michael Gosselin), and up to two continued 9 Feb (Ricky Davis) into March (m. obs.). One seen at the South Wake County Landfill *Wake* NC 24 Jan (Brian Bockhahn, et al.) may have been the same individual seen at nearby Jordan Lake

Chatham NC 12 Dec through 10 Jan (Jonathan Cantrell, m. obs.). A first-winter bird at the Horry County Landfill *Horry* SC 17 Dec through 28 Jan (Chris Hill, m. obs.) was the only report from SC.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: 424 at Buckhorn Reservoir *Wilson* NC 2 Feb (Ricky Davis) was a truly amazing count for a site away from the coast. 24 on Lake Townsend *Guilford* NC 30 Jan (Henry Link, et al.) was a notable count for the Triad area. County firsts included three in a field near Clarkton *Bladen* NC 30 Dec (Amy Padgett), seven at the Rockingham County Landfill *Rockingham* NC 30 Jan (Marty Wall), three on Lake Randleman *Randolph* NC 5 Feb (Andrew Thornton), and eight at the Alamance County Landfill *Alamance* NC 12 Feb (David Pennebaker). Farthest inland this winter was a first-winter bird on Lake Hickory *Alexander* and *Catawba* NC 11-25 Feb (Dwayne Martin, Lori Owenby, m. obs.).

Lesser Black-backed Gull with Ring-billed Gulls, 11 Feb 2020, Catawba Co, NC.
Photo by Dwayne Martin

Glaucous Gull: Sightings, all made in NC, included an immature at Pea Island NWR *Dare* 11 Jan (Jamie Adams, Jeff Lewis), an immature on Ocracoke Island *Hyde* during its CBC 29 Dec (Hal Broadfoot), an immature at Cape Point *Dare* 3 Jan (Baxter Beamer, Martina Nordstrand) intermittently into March (m. obs.), two immatures at Cape Point 31

Jan (Kate Sutherland), and a third-winter bird on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* 16 Feb and 17 Feb (Brian Patteson, Sutherland, et al.).

Great Black-backed Gull: Three seen in central *Dorchester* SC during the Four Holes Swamp CBC 16 Dec (Dave Eslinger, David McLean) were a first for that count and possibly also that county.

Caspian Tern: One at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 3-31 Jan (Baxter Beamer, Martina Nordstrand, m. obs.) was unusual for a site so far north in mid-winter.

Royal Tern: One photographed on Lake Marion at Santee SP *Orangeburg* SC during the Santee NWR CBC 21 Dec (Irvin Pitts) was unusual for a site away from the coast.

Red-throated Loon: One on Roanoke Rapids Lake *Halifax* NC 24 Feb (Merrill Lynch) was a good find for an inland lake.

Pacific Loon: One was seen on Kerr Lake *Vance* NC during its CBC 2 Jan (Ann Brice, Fred Lobdell). After one was photographed off Johnnie Mercer's Pier *New Hanover* NC 2 Feb (Jamie Adams), two were photographed together there 11 Feb (Adams). Pending review by the SC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent Pacific Loon on Lake Jocassee at Devil's Fork SP *Oconee* SC 28 Feb (Jay Mager, Nina Schoch, et al.).

Northern Fulmar: One seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 16 Feb (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.) was the only one reported this winter.

Manx Shearwater: There was a noticeable movement along the Outer Banks 28 Jan through 23 Feb, with the highest counts being 17 off Coquina Beach *Dare* NC 29 Jan (Megan Baker, Michael Gosselin) and 20 off Jennette's Pier *Dare* NC 7 Feb (Ed Corey, et al.).

Wood Stork: Sightings were made at sites farther north in NC than is typical in winter, in January and February though strangely not in December, including two at Lake Auman *Moore* in early January (*fide* Susan Campbell), five photographed in flight over Alligator River NWR *Dare* 7 Jan (Michael Gosselin, et al.), one in Pine Knoll Shores *Carteret* 9 Jan (John Fussell), one in New Bern *Craven* 19 Jan through 3 Feb (Michael Cheves, m. obs.), one in Nags Head *Dare* 25 Jan through 6 Feb (m. obs.), two in Sneads Ferry *Onslow* 30 Jan and 10 Feb (Gilbert Grant), one in Emerald Isle *Carteret* 1 Feb (Kathleen Johnston), and one along Ware Creek *Carteret* 18 Feb (Bill Kirby-Smith). A second-year individual photographed along a small creek near the Little Tennessee River in *Macon* NC 15 Jan (Barbara McRae) was totally unprecedented for the mountain region in winter.

Northern Gannet: 1000 off the south end of Litchfield Beach *Georgetown* SC during a Carolina Bird Club field trip 17 Jan (Brad Dalton, et al.) was a notable count for SC. 150 at the Cedar Island Ferry Terminal *Carteret* NC 8 Jan (Amy Padgett) was a notable count for a site away from the ocean.

Great Cormorant: The individual found just below the dam on Lake Thurmond *McCormick* SC 15 Nov (Milton Hobbs) was seen throughout the winter (m. obs.). This species was well-reported at two sites on the NC coast—at Beaufort Inlet *Carteret* where up to five were seen 15 Dec into March (m. obs.) and at Masonboro Inlet *New Hanover* where up to six were seen 16 Nov into March (Sam Cooper, m. obs.).

Anhinga: One photographed just below Tuckertown Dam *Montgomery* and *Stanly* NC 19-20 Jan and 2 Feb (Allen Wolford) was the inland-most sighting made this winter.

American White Pelican: Sightings made outside of the coastal plain included one at Chris Taylor Memorial Park *Anderson* SC 11 Dec (Steve Patterson, m. obs.), one on Jordan Lake *Chatham* NC 10-11 Jan (Matt Spangler, m. obs.), and seven on Jordan Lake 10 Feb (Vern Bothwell, Don Pelly). The annual late winter congregation just below High Rock Dam *Davidson* and *Rowan* NC began with six on 19 Jan (Allen Wolford), grew to 61 by 21 Feb (Steve Coggin), and peaked at 96 on 3 Mar (Steven Fasciana).

Reddish Egret: One lingered on Bulls Island Cape Romain NWR *Charleston* SC through 30 Jan (David McLean).

Green Heron: A moribund bird found along NC-12 a mile south of Whalebone Junction *Dare* NC (Jeff Beane, Ed Corey, et al.) was unusual for a site so far north in winter. One photographed at Camp T.N. Spencer Park *Cabarrus* NC 27 Dec (David Hebert) was unusual for a site so far from the coast in winter.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: An adult photographed at Beaver Lake *Buncombe* NC 18-19 Dec (Tom Bush, Jay Wherley, m. obs.) was extremely unusual for a site in the mountain region during the winter.

White Ibis: A juvenile at Lake Conestee Nature Preserve *Greenville* SC 2-7 Dec (JoAnne Keasler, m. obs.) was very unusual for a site in the Piedmont during the winter.

Golden Eagle: Sightings included an immature photographed by a trail camera in *Stokes* NC 2 Dec (*fide* Ed Corey), an adult in flight over northern *Watauga* NC 16 Dec (Merrill Lynch), an adult at Alligator River NWR *Dare* NC 16 Dec (Kevin O'Kane) intermittently through 2 Feb (Stacy Barbour, Jeff Blalock), an adult in the Lake Landing area of Mattamuskeet NWR *Hyde* NC during its CBC 29 Dec (Steve Shultz), an adult at the Savannah River Site *Barnwell* SC 14 Jan (Matt Malin), and an adult photographed in the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR *Hyde* and *Washington* NC in late January (Mike Dunn).

Snail Kite: Already accepted by the NC BRC was the report with photographs of a juvenile bird in flight a few miles north or Oregon Inlet *Dare* NC 4 Dec (Chance Hines). The report provided NC with its second record, the first being a moribund bird found in *Columbus* NC in Apr 2009.

Rough-legged Hawk: One was seen throughout much of the winter at Alligator River NWR *Dare* NC, 7 Dec through 23 Feb (m. obs.).

Long-eared Owl: Pending review by the SC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent Long-eared Owl perched on a signpost on the beach at Huntington Beach SP *Georgetown* SC 3 Dec (Ashley Miller, Mike Walker). If accepted, the report would provide SC with its first official record in five years.

Northern Saw-whet Owl: One was heard calling along the entrance road to the Bodie Island Lighthouse *Dare* NC 9 Feb into early March (Allen Bryan, m. obs.).

Ash-throated Flycatcher: This species was extremely well-reported this winter. Individuals were seen on the south side of Oregon Inlet *Dare* NC 7 Dec (Jonathan Cooley, m. obs.) through 29 Dec (Trevor Sleight), on private land in *Calhoun* SC during the Congaree Swamp CBC 15 Dec (Carl Miller, et al.), along Swindell Rd in *Beaufort* NC 18 Dec (Kevin O'Kane), at Yawkey Wildlife Center *Georgetown* SC during the Winyah Bay CBC 19 Dec (John Hutchens, Felicia Sanders), along the Moccasin Trail at Pettigrew SP *Washington* NC during its CBC 27 Dec (Randy Basnett, Brian Bockhahn), on Hilton Head Island *Beaufort* SC 23 Dec (William Wise), on private land in *Sampson* NC 1 Jan (Sharon Funderburk), at North River Preserve *Carteret* NC 11 Jan (Rich & Susan Boyd) through 2 Feb (John Fussell, et al.), near the 1921 Monument at Ft Fisher *New Hanover* NC 15 Jan (Jamie Adams), at Alligator River NWR *Dare* NC 20 Jan (Joe Donahue, et al.) through 2 Mar (Karen Lebing), in the Cox Ferry Recreation Area at Waccamaw NWR *Horry* SC 26 Jan (Steve Coggin, et al.), presumably the same individual at the Grand Strand WTP along Jackson Bluff Rd in *Horry* SC, 27 Jan (Chris Hill) through 15 Feb (Ritch Lilly), at Watermark Lake in Mt Pleasant *Charleston* SC 23 Jan (Starr Hazard) through 7 Mar (Brad Sale), at Sea Pines Forest Preserve on Hilton Head Island, presumably the same bird first seen on the island 23 Dec, 30 Jan (Mary Alice Tartler) through 9 Mar (Steven Guy), and along Alder Branch Rd in *Camden* NC 9 Feb (Elisa & Nick Flanders). By early February it became evident that there were actually two Ash-throated Flycatchers at Alligator River NWR, as individuals were seen at sites over two miles apart on 3 Feb

Ash-throated Flycatcher, 11 Jan 2020, Carteret Co, NC. Photo by Rich Boyd

(Jim Gould). One wonders how long both individuals were present at the refuge. As this species is still on the review list in SC, all reports from that state are pending review by its BRC.

Western Kingbird: One seen and photographed along Tuttle Rd in *Stokes* NC 27-31 Dec (Tony & Cara Woods, m. obs.) was very unusual for the Piedmont region. In the coastal plain, where the species is more expected, individuals were photographed perched on powerlines in *Washington* NC 15 Dec (Steve Shultz, et al.) and in Wanchese *Dare* NC during the Bodie/Pea Island CBC 28 Dec (Brian Bockhahn, Kyle Kittelberger).

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher: One seen and photographed along Jenkins Farm Rd on Johns Island *Charleston* SC 19 Jan (Pam Ford, Aaron Given, m. obs.) was extremely unusual for the winter period.

Common Raven: Near the southeast limit of the species' range were two in flight over NC-109 in northwestern *Richmond* NC 10 Jan (David Williams) and two around where US-1 crosses the Deep River *Chatham* and *Lee* NC intermittently throughout the winter (Jimmy Randolph).

Northern Rough-winged Swallow: One photographed at Ecusta Pond *Transylvania* NC 11 Dec (Michael Plauché, et al.) was quite late to depart.

Sedge Wren: One photographed at Ninety Six National Historic Site *Greenwood* SC 28 Dec and 4 Jan (Chris Contakos) was a good find for the Piedmont in winter.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: One at Mills River Park *Henderson* NC 31 Dec (John Campbell) was unusual for the mountain region in winter.

Pine Siskin: 160+ on Roan Mountain *Mitchell* NC 2 Jan (Rick Knight) was a notable count outside a major irruption year.

Lapland Longspur: Individuals were seen or heard along Mid-Pines Rd in *Wake* NC 6 Dec (Cathy Sue Harvey) and 25-31 Dec (Harry LeGrand, m. obs.) and along Hooper Lane in *Henderson* NC 4 Jan (Mike Resch) and 10 Feb (Kevin Burke).

Snow Bunting: One was seen in the parking lot at Coquina Beach *Dare* NC 5-8 Dec (David & Susan Disher, m. obs.). Up to two were seen on the south side of Murrells Inlet *Georgetown* SC 9-21 Dec (Linda Montgomery, m. obs.). 12 at Currituck NWR *Currituck* NC 17 Dec (Jonathan Cooley) was a notable count.

Grasshopper Sparrow: One photographed along Piedmont Dairy Rd in *Spartanburg* SC 1 Feb (Michael Robertson) was a good find for the Piedmont in winter.

Lark Sparrow: Up to six visited a yard with feeders along Alder Branch Rd in *Camden* NC throughout the winter (James Harrison). Two were seen at Pee Dee NWR *Anson* NC

during its CBC 4 Jan (Judy Walker, et al.). Individuals were seen in northeastern *New Hanover* NC 15 Dec (Derb Carter) through 22 Feb (Sam Cooper), at Veterans Park just south of Wilmington *New Hanover* NC 4 Jan (Jamie Adams), and at Ezell Farm Community Park *Mecklenburg* NC 11 Jan (Taylor Piephoff, et al.) through 17 Mar (Matt Janson).

Savannah Sparrow (Ipswich Sparrow): Nine in a flock on the beach at Ft Macon SP *Carteret* NC 16 Feb (Harry LeGrand, Will Cook) and twelve in a flock there 26 Feb (Marty Wall) were a notable concentration of this subspecies of Savannah Sparrow.

Clay-colored Sparrow: This species was reported at six sites in the NC coastal plain this winter, with one along Leggett Rd in *Edgecombe* NC 12 Jan (Ricky Davis) through 19 Jan (David Williams) being the farthest from the coast.

LeConte's Sparrow: One was photographed on a private farm in *Nash* NC during the Rocky Mount CBC 20 Dec (Ann Brice, et al.). One photographed just outside Brevard *Transylvania* NC 14 Feb (Bob Butler, Michael Plauché) was especially unusual for the mountain region.

Henslow's Sparrow: One seen and photographed at Latta Plantation Nature Preserve *Mecklenburg* NC 29 Feb (Chris Bolling, Patty Masten, et al.) and 1 Mar (m. obs.) was very unusual for a site in the Piedmont.

Lincoln's Sparrow: Two in northern *Dorchester* SC during the Four Holes Swamp CBC 16 Dec (Matt Johnson, Kristen Oliver, Jake Zadik) was this winter's high count. One photographed at Leicester Patch *Buncombe* NC 26 Dec (Doug Johnston) was unusual for the mountain region in winter.

Yellow-breasted Chat: Chats were found at ten sites in the NC coastal plain this winter, with one visiting a suet feeder in Greenville *Pitt* 9 Feb (John Daughtry) being the farthest inland.

Yellow-headed Blackbird: An adult male photographed at a feeder in Morrisville *Wake* NC 31 Jan (Myra Murphy) was the only one reported this winter.

Bobolink: One seen in *Gaston* NC during the Gastonia CBC 14 Dec (Taylor Piephoff) was extremely late. In fact, this Bobolink was only the third ever found in the Carolinas during the winter.

Orchard Oriole: A female photographed at a feeder in Mt Pleasant *Charleston* SC 16-17 Dec (Connie Fowler) was incredibly late.

Bullock's Oriole: Adult males visited feeders at two sites in SC this winter—in Bluffton *Beaufort* 20 Dec through 4 Jan (Kevin Brady, m. obs.) and on the northwestern shore of Lake Moultrie *Berkeley* 15 Jan through 8 Mar (Bob & Monica Bradley, m. obs.).

Apparent Bronzed Cowbird (with Brown-headed Cowbird and Red-winged Blackbird), 28 Feb 2020, Carteret Co, NC. Photo by Dave Fischer

Bronzed Cowbird: Pending review by the NC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent Bronzed Cowbird visiting a feeder in Morehead City *Carteret* NC 11 Feb (Carol Reigle, m. obs.) through 29 Feb (Sean Leahy, Dawn Lloyd). If accepted, the report would become the first record of this species in NC.

Brewer's Blackbird: 24 east of Pendleton *Anderson* SC during the Clemson CBC 19 Dec (Drew Lanham, et al.) and 32 in the Cuddo Unit of Santee NWR *Clarendon* SC during its CBC 21 Dec (John Grego) were good counts. One seen along County Rd near Lake Junaluska *Haywood* NC 21 Dec (Stan & Connie Wulkowicz) was locally unusual.

Ovenbird: Nine in *Dare* NC during the Cape Hatteras CBC 27 Dec (*fide* Karen Lebing) was a notable count for winter. Individuals in Charlotte *Mecklenburg* NC 8 Dec (Jeffrey Turner), in Seven Oaks *Lexington* SC 30-31 Dec (Carl Osborne), and in Durham *Durham* NC 8-10 Jan (Ryland Bowman) were notable for sites away from the coast in winter.

Northern Waterthrush: At least six were found in the SC coastal plain this winter, including one at Caw Caw Interpretive Center *Charleston* throughout the period (m. obs.) and two at that site 27 Dec (Marc Regnier) and 1 Feb (Keith McCullough, et al.).

Black-and-white Warbler: This species was well-reported across the coastal plain and Piedmont this winter, with record counts made on multiple CBCs.

Tennessee Warbler: One photographed in a yard in Cary *Wake* NC 20 Jan (David Ley) was extremely unusual for mid-winter.

Orange-crowned Warbler: 27 at Mattamuskeet NWR *Hyde* NC during its CBC 29 Dec (*fide* Susan Campbell) was a notable count.

Nashville Warbler: Three were reported this winter—individuals at Mattamuskeet NWR *Hyde* NC during its CBC 29 Dec (Allen Bryan, Marc Ribaudo), at a feeder in West Ashley *Charleston* SC where photographed 12 Jan (Marc Regnier), and at Botany Bay Plantation WMA *Charleston* SC 26 Jan (Matt Johnson).

Common Yellowthroat: One visiting a feeder near Beaver Lake *Buncombe* NC 8 Dec through 7 Jan (Diane Lombardi) was unusual for the mountain region in winter.

American Redstart: Three were reported this winter—female/immature-plumaged individuals at Santee Coastal Reserve *Charleston* SC 21 Dec (Mandy & Mark Johnson), just east of New Holland *Hyde* NC during the Mattamuskeet NWR CBC 29 Dec (Allen Bryan, Marc Ribaudo), and along Wildlife Drive at Mattamuskeet NWR *Hyde* NC 18 Jan (Robert Meehan, et al.).

Northern Parula: About half a dozen were reported this winter. Individuals along Brickhouse Rd in *Durham* NC 8 Dec (Jim Capel), at Saluda Shoals Park *Lexington* SC 28 Dec (Jerry Griggs, Irvin Pitts) and 8 Jan (Pitts), and at a feeder in north Raleigh *Wake* NC 30 Dec through 31 Jan (Erla Beegle) were especially unusual for sites away from the coast.

Yellow Warbler: One at Carolina Beach Lake *New Hanover* NC 1 Jan (Ryan Justice) through 26 Jan (Matt Wangerin) was a good find for winter.

Yellow-rumped Warbler (Audubon's Warbler): A western race Yellow-rumped Warbler was seen in Sanderling *Dare* NC 19 Jan (Jeff Lewis).

Yellow-throated Warbler: 17 in *Beaufort* SC during the Lowcountry CBC 14 Dec (*fide* Buddy Campbell) was a record number for that count. Two along N Lake Rd in *Hyde* NC 28 Dec (Allen Bryan) was a good count for a site so far north. One visiting a suet feeder in *Greenville* SC 31 Dec and 23 Jan (Simon Harvey) was unusual for upstate SC in mid-winter.

Prairie Warbler: One at Clark's Creek Nature Preserve *Mecklenburg* NC 15 Dec (Jeff Lemons, et al.) through 26 Jan (Taylor Piephoff) was unusual for the Piedmont in winter.

Wilson's Warbler: Individuals in the Bluff Unit of Santee NWR *Clarendon* SC 4 Dec (Dennis Forsythe) and at Savannah NWR *Jasper* SC 28 Feb (Bob Friedrichs) were good finds for winter.

Summer Tanager: Individuals were seen in a yard in eastern *Brunswick* NC 15 Nov through 10 Mar (Greg Massey), in a yard in Hillsborough *Orange* NC 1 Dec through 18 Mar (Carol Tuskey), visiting a feeder near Varnamtown *Brunswick* NC 3-11 Dec (Scott Stokley), in Myrtle Beach *Horry* SC 1 Jan (Ritch Lilly), in a yard on Hilton Head Island *Beaufort* SC 20 Jan through 17 Mar (Liz Cieszynski), and visiting a suet feeder in Manteo *Dare* NC in late January (*fide* Jeff Lewis).

Western Tanager: This species was well-reported again this winter. Individuals visited feeders in Raleigh *Wake* NC for the second year in a row 25 Nov through 25 Mar (Sam Jolly, m. obs.), in southern *Horry* SC 30 Nov through 1 Dec (Jordan Matejeck), in Salvo *Dare* NC 20 Dec (Connie Meekins), in Burlington *Alamance* NC 3 Jan through 10 Feb (Joe Donahue, m. obs.), in Charlotte *Mecklenburg* NC 11 Jan through 23 Feb (m. obs.), in

Trent Woods *Craven* NC for the second year in a row 18 Jan through 5 Mar (Lee Rouse), on James Island *Charleston* SC for the second year in a row 19 Jan through 17 Feb (Barbara Spence), in Mt Pleasant *Charleston* SC for the second year in a row 22 Jan through 19 Mar (Elizabeth Anderegg, m. obs.), in western *Johnston* NC for a second year in a row 23 Jan (Mary Ann Booth) through 22 Feb (David Williams), in northwestern Charleston *Charleston* SC 23 Jan through 16 Feb (Jennifer Marshall, m. obs.), in Winston Salem *Forsyth* NC 12-29 Feb (m. obs.), and in northeastern *New Hanover* NC 22 Feb (Sam Cooper). Two individuals were banded in the yard in Mt Pleasant 15 Feb (Lex Glover), and, amazingly, a third un-banded bird was reported there 17 Feb (Anderegg).

Western Tanager, 4 Feb 2020, Alamance Co, NC. Photo by Dave Fischer

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: Individuals photographed at feeders in Providence *Orangeburg* SC, a male, 27 Jan (Harold Donnelly) and in Waves *Dare* NC, a female, 15-17 Feb (Karen Lebing) were very unusual for winter.

Painted Bunting: Farthest inland this winter were individual adult males visiting feeders in Clayton *Johnston* NC 26 Jan (Ava Strickland), in Winston Salem *Forsyth* NC 15-16 Feb (*fide* John Haire), and on the southern shore of Lake Murray *Lexington* SC 24 Feb through 5 Mar (Irvin Pitts).

Dickcissel: Eleven were reported this winter, most at sites along the coast but also at four sites in NC Piedmont. Individuals photographed along US-264 just east of New Holland *Hyde* NC during the Mattamuskeet NWR CBC 29 Dec (Allen Bryan, Marc Ribaudo) and on Wadmalaw Island *Charleston* SC during the Sea Islands CBC 3 Jan (Dave Eslinger) were firsts for those counts.

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- To support the protection and conservation of birds and their habitats and foster an appreciation and respect of natural resources.
- To promote educational opportunities in bird and nature study.
- To support research on birds of the Carolinas and their habitats.

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The Chat

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Photo by David Fischer

2019 Annual Report of the South Carolina Bird Record Committee

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In 2019, the South Carolina Bird Records Committee acted on 34 new reports, of which 27 were accepted, three were not accepted, and four will be re-reviewed.

The accepted records detailed below add one species to South Carolina's Main List: Trumpeter Swan. The Main List now includes 440 species. Rough-legged Hawk, Swainson's Hawk, and Roseate Tern have been elevated from the Provisional I List to the Definitive List based on photographic evidence. Trumpeter Swan will be removed from the Provisional II List.

The East Coast from Florida to Maine experienced an "invasion" of Ash-throated Flycatchers during the fall and winter of 2019. Ash-throated Flycatcher was only added to the South Carolina's Main List in 2011 with a bird photographed in Beaufort County. Up until this report, only six records of Ash-throated Flycatcher have been accepted by the Committee. This year the Committee received and accepted six separate reports. Two additional reports were received by the Committee in early 2020.

The annual meeting of the SCBRC was held on 14 December 2019 at the Charleston County Parks Headquarters in Charleston. The meeting was attended in person by Jeff Click, Aaron Given, Keith McCullough, and Chris Hill. Lex Glover, Simon Harvey, and Steve Wagner joined by telephone conference. Aaron Given was re-elected as Chair. Lex Glover agreed to another term as Secretary. Jeff Click and Chris Hill were re-elected to the Nomination Committee. The Committee decided to not add or remove any species from the Review List. Much of the discussion during the meeting focused on revising the Committee's bylaws, for which a first draft was produced earlier in the year.

There were no changes to the membership in 2019.

ACCEPTED REPORTS

Brant (*Branta bernicla*). 2019-012. Accept (9-0). The Committee voted on an eBird report from Julian Donahue, who photographed a Brant in North Santee Bay (Georgetown Co.) on 25 October 2019. This is the state's fourth record.

Brant (*Branta bernicla*). 2019-033. Accept (9-0). Chris Hill submitted a written report along with two photos of a Brant that had been seen at the Tom Yawkey Center (Georgetown Co.) on 18 December 2019.

Cackling Goose (*Branta hutchinsii).* 2019-032. Accept (9-0). Gary Harbour and Michael Robertson submitted separate reports of four Cackling Geese seen at Lake Robinson (Greenville Co.) on 19 December 2019. Several distant but diagnostic photos

were included with the report. The photos showed the Cackling Geese adjacent to Canada Geese, which allowed the Committee to make a judgement on their size.

Cackling Geese (with Canada Geese), 19 Dec 19, Greenville Co, SC. Photo by Gary Harbour and Michael Robertson.

Trumpeter Swan (*Cygnus buccinator).* 2019-006. Accept (9-0). Irvin Pitts submitted a written report along with six photographs of an immature Trumpeter Swan seen at Bear Island Wildlife Management Area (Colleton Co.) on 8 March 2019. The bird was relocated on 11 March 2019 by other birders. This report represents the first record of Trumpeter Swan in South Carolina, which will move from the Provisional II list to the Definitive List.

Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*). 2019-001. Accept (9-0). David McLean submitted a written report along with three photos of a Tufted Duck at Bulls Island (Charleston Co.) on 8 February 2019. This is the second record for South Carolina, with the first occurring last winter, also at Bulls Island.

Harlequin Duck (*Histrionicus histrionicus*). 2019-019. Accept (9-0). Shawn Smolen-Morton submitted a written report along with one photo of a Harlequin Duck at Huntington Beach State Park (Georgetown Co.) on 5 December 2019. This bird was originally reported on 4 December 2019 with the last eBird report on 18 December 2019.

Red-necked Grebe (*Podiceps grisegena*). 2019-005. Accept (8-1). Robert Taylor submitted a written report of a Red-necked Grebe at Huntington Beach State Park (Georgetown Co.) on 28 January 2019. This is only the fourth record for the state.

Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*). 2019-002. Accept (9-0). David McLean submitted a written report along with four photographs of a Western Grebe seen at Bulls Island (Charleston Co.) on 7 February 2019.

Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucoides*). 2019-020. Accept (9-0). Chris Hill submitted a written report along with two photographs of an Iceland Gull at the Horry County Landfill (Horry Co.) on 17 January 2019.

Roseate Tern (*Sterna dougallii*). 2019-007. Accept (9-0). The Committee received three separate written reports from Paul Laurent, Ritch Lilly, and Shawn Smolen-Morton of up to three individual Roseate Terns at Huntington Beach State Park (Georgetown Co.) from 30 June – 5 July 2019. Several photographs and one video were submitted. This is the state's second record.

Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster*). 2019-016. Accept (9-0). Keith McCullough submitted a detailed written report of a Brown Booby at Folly Beach (Charleston Co.) on 8 November 2019.

Great Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*). 2019-017. Accept (9-0). Lois Stacey submitted a written report of an inland Great Cormorant from Clark's Hill Dam on Strom Thurmond Lake (McCormick Co.) on 17 November 2019. The bird was seen and photographed by many birders into the winter.

Snail Kite (*Rostrhamus sociabilis*). 2019-014. Accept (9-0). Brad Sale submitted a written report along with five photos of a Snail Kite at Lake Marion (Clarendon Co.) that was seen from 31 October – 3 November 2019. This is South Carolina's fourth record of Snail Kite.

Snail Kite, 31 Oct 19, Clarendon Co, SC. Photo by Brad Sale.

Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*). 2019-015. Accept (9-0). The Committee voted on an eBird report from Tim Baerwald who photographed a Swainson's Hawk at the Avian Conservation Center (Charleston Co.) on 7 November 2019. This is the state's second record.

Rough-legged Hawk (*Buteo lagopus*). 2019-003. Accept (8-1). The Committee voted on an eBird report with from John Cox and Nathan Dias of a Rough-legged Hawk that was photographed at Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge (Charleston Co.) on 17 December 2011. This is the state's second record.

Snowy Owl (*Bubo scandiacus*). 2019-022. Accept (9-0). Chris Hill submitted a written report along with one photograph on behalf of an anonymous reporter of a Snowy Owl at Myrtle Beach State Park (Horry Co.) on 7 December 2019.

Long-eared Owl (*Asio otus*). 2019-023. Accept (9-0). The Committee voted on an eBird report from Mike Walker of a Long-eared Owl that was photographed at Huntington Beach State Park (Georgetown Co.) on 3 December 2019. This represents a third record for South Carolina.

Ash-throated Flycatcher (*Myiarchus cinerascens*). 2019-025. Accept (9-0). The Committee voted on an eBird report with three photos from Steven Guy of an Ash-throated Flycatcher at Port Royal Boardwalk (Beaufort Co.) on 22 October 2019.

Ash-throated Flycatcher (*Myiarchus cinerascens*). 2019-026. Accept (9-0). Aaron Given submitted a written report along with two photos of an Ash-throated Flycatcher that was captured and banded at Kiawah Island (Charleston Co.) on 13-14 November 2019.

Ash-throated Flycatcher (*Myiarchus cinerascens*). 2019-027. Accept (9-0). The Committee voted on an eBird report with four photos from Ritch Lilly of an Ash-throated Flycatcher at Huntington Beach State Park (Georgetown Co.) on 17 November 2019.

Ash-throated Flycatcher (*Myiarchus cinerascens*). 2019-028. Accept (9-0). The Committee voted on an eBird report from Matt Johnson, Cathy Miller, and Carl Miller with three photos of an Ash-throated Flycatcher on private property in Calhoun Co. on 15 December 2019.

Ash-throated Flycatcher (*Myiarchus cinerascens*). 2019-029. Accept (9-0). John Hutchens submitted a written report along with five photos of an Ash-throated Flycatcher that was seen during the Winyah Bay Christmas Bird Count at the Yawkey Wildlife Center (Georgetown Co.) on 19 December 2019.

Ash-throated Flycatcher (*Myiarchus cinerascens*). 2019-030. Accept (9-0). The Committee voted on an eBird report with four photos from William Wise at Hilton Head (Beaufort Co.) on 23 December 2019.

Tropical Kingbird (*Tyrannus melancholicus*). 2019-004. Accept (9-0). Craig Watson submitted a very detailed report along with eight photos of a Tropical Kingbird at Ft. Moultrie National Monument (Charleston Co.) on 16 June 2019. This is the second record of Tropical Kingbird for South Carolina, with the first being seen in 2018.

Tropical Kingbird, 16 Jun 19, Charleston Co, SC. Photo by Craig Watson.

Bell's Vireo (*Vireo bellii*). 2019-011. Accept (9-0). Michael Adams submitted a written report along with five photos of a Bell's Vireo at Ft. Moultrie National Monument (Charleston Co.) on 23-24 October 2019.

Kirtland's Warbler (*Setophaga kirtlandii*). 2019-010. Accept (8-1). Kevin Kubach submitted a written report of a Kirtland's Warbler at Fants Grove Wildlife Management Area (Charleston Co.) on 7 October 2019. This is South Carolina's third record.

Bullock's Oriole (*Icterus bullockii*). 2019-031. Accept (9-0). The Committee voted on an eBird report with four photos from Kevin Brady of a male Bullock's Oriole at Rose Hill Plantation (Beaufort Co.) on 20 December 2019.

NON-ACCEPTED REPORTS

Cassin's Kingbird (*Tyrannus vociferans*). 2019-013. Non-accept (1-8). The Committee considered an eBird report of a Cassin's Kingbird from Colleton County in

October 2019. Based on the photograph from the eBird report, the Committee felt that there was not enough evidence to positively identify this bird.

Tricolored Munia (*Lonchura malacca*). 2019-008. Non-accept (2-7). The Committee considered a written report along with several photos of a Tricolored Munia in Colleton County in July 2019. Although the identification was correct, the origin of this bird was
in question. Tricolored Munias are popular in the pet trade, and the Committee felt that an escapee was just as likely as a vagrant from a self-sustaining population.

Tricolored Munia (*Lonchura malacca*). 2019-034. Non-accept (2-7). The Committee considered an eBird report with photos of four individuals from Georgetown County in August 2019. Although the identification was correct, the origin of this bird was in question. Tricolored Munias are popular in the pet trade, and the Committee felt that an escapee was just as likely as a vagrant from a self-sustaining population.

UNRESOLVED REPORTS

The following reports received a majority of votes to accept but more than one vote to not accept. These reports will need to be reevaluated by the Committee.

Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*). 2019-009. Re-review (7-2). The Committee reviewed a written report with a distant photo of a Say's Phoebe from Charleston County in September 2019.

Cave Swallow (*Petrochelidon fulva*). 2019-018. Re-review (6-3). The Committee reviewed an eBird report of a Cave Swallow photographed in Horry County in November of 2019. Some Committee Members felt that the photos were not conclusive enough to identify the bird as a Cave Swallow.

Monk Parakeet (*Myiopsitta monachus).* 2019-021. Re-review (5-4). The Committee reviewed a written report of a Monk Parakeet from Horry County in September of 2019. Based on the photos submitted, the identification was correct but the Committee disagreed with the stated origin of this bird.

Bullock's Oriole (*Icterus bullockii*). 2019-024. Re-review (5-4). The Committee reviewed a written report of a Bullock's Oriole from Beaufort County in October of 2016. The description provided left some Committee Members wanting additional documentation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Committee thanks all the observers who submitted reports and those who encouraged others to submit reports. Your actions increase our understanding of bird occurrence in South Carolina.

2019 Annual Report of the North Carolina Bird Record Committee

Nathan A. Swick [1], Chair, Keith E. Camburn, C. William Cook, Jan J. Hansen, Z. Taylor Piephoff, Jeffrey S. Pippen, Steven P. Shultz, Andrew K. Thornton, Robert W. Van Epps

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The make-up of the 2019 North Carolina Bird Records Committee included additions of C. William Cook, Z. Taylor Piephoff, and Steven P. Shultz as voting members, and the retention of Richard J. Davis and Harry E. LeGrand, Jr. in advisory capacities. Samuel Cooper, W. Jefferson Lemons, and Joshua L. Southern rotated off the Committee for at least a one-year hiatus.

All italicized place names are counties.

ACCEPTED REPORTS

Trindade Petrel (*Pterodroma arminjoniana*) (19-01) An eBird report made by Alec Hopping and Logan Kahle containing a written description and a series of photos of a *Pterodroma* petrel at Buckhorn Reservoir (*Wilson*) in the wake of Hurricane Florence on 15 September 2018 was unanimously accepted by the North Carolina Bird Records Committee (NCBRC) in 2019. Photos by Hopping and Kahle confirmed the bird as a Trindade Petrel, the first inland record of this species in North Carolina.

Kirtland's Warbler (*Setophaga kirtlandii*) (18-03). The NCBRC reviewed excellent photos of a sub-adult Kirtland's Warbler taken by Pat Draisey and Joyce Edwards at Duck boardwalk (*Dare*). The bird was present from 3-5 October 2017. The report was unanimously accepted and represents the first coastal record of this Federally endangered warbler for North Carolina.

Tundra Swan (Bewick's) (*Cygnus columbianus bewickii*) (19-05). A thorough report with photographs submitted by Ricky Davis of a *bewickii* Tundra Swan among a large flock of the expected nominate subspecies in *Edgecombe* was accepted unanimously by the NCBRC. This individual was seen from 2-4 February 2019, and represents not only the first record of this Old World subspecies of our familiar wintering Tundra Swans in North Carolina, but a first for the eastern United States.

Limpkin (*Aramus guarana).* 2019 saw multiple noteworthy Limpkin records in North Carolina. The following reports were accepted by the NCBRC:

> (19-07) The committee unanimously accepted the report of a Limpkin at Mountain Island Lake (*Mecklenburg*) with written description by Kent Fiala and

photos by Rob Van Epps, Dwayne Martin, and Bert Fisher. This bird was present from 22 May-9 June 2019 and represents the sixth record of this species in the state.

(19-08) Written description and photos of a Limpkin at Owen Park in Swannanoa (*Buncombe*) on 8 July 2019 submitted by Sam Pratt were accepted unanimously by the NCBRC. This represents the state's seventh record.

(19-15) Photos of a Limpkin at Lake Tillery (*Stanly*) submitted by Matt Wangerin were accepted unanimously. This bird was present from 21 November to 2 December 2019 and represents North Carolina's eighth record.

Pacific Golden-Plover (*Pluvialis fulva*) (19-09). An exciting record of a Pacific Golden-Plover present from 29 July-7 August 2019 at the Salt Pond, Cape Hatteras National Seashore (*Dare*), with written description and photographs from Michael Gosselin, was unanimously accepted by the NCBRC. This represents the first record for this species in North Carolina, and one of only a few records of this species on the east coast of North America. By virtue of the photos it is added to the Definitive List.

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (*Calidris acuminata*) (19-10) A Sharp-tailed Sandpiper seen at the South Pond of Pea Island NWR (*Dare)* on 11-12 July 2019 was unanimously accepted by the NCBRC. With written description and photographs by Karen Lebing, this represents the third North Carolina record of this Old World shorebird.

Swainson's Thrush (*Catharus ustulatus*) (19-11) A very unusual winter record of Swainson's Thrush from Beaver Lake Bird Sanctuary (*Buncombe)* was unanimously accepted by the NCBRC. Written description and photo were submitted by Jay Wherley from an observation on 6 January, but bird was present from 2-6 January 2019. This represents one of only a few winter records of this Neotropical migrant in the United States, and is the first such record for North Carolina.

Trumpeter Swan (*Cygnus buccinator*) (19-12). The NCBRC unanimously accepted a written description and photo of a Trumpeter Swan at Jordan Lake (*Chatham*), 26 February 2019, submitted by Louise Belk. While Trumpeter Swan has been an uncommon, though expected, winter species among large Tundra Swan flocks in the Coastal Plain in recent years, this represents a second record for North Carolina's Piedmont region. Of note, the observer described two Trumpeter Swans in the written description, although the accompanying photo shows only one bird along with a Tundra Swan.

Snail Kite (*Rostrhamus sociabilis*) (19-13). The committee considered and accepted (8-1) a photo of a sub--adult Snail Kite photographed at Oregon Inlet (*Dare*) by Nick Newberry on 4 December 2019. The committee lamented the fact that this report consisted of little more than a series of photos that, while definitive, offered little in the way of context. In any case, this represents the second record for this species in North Carolina and the first living record as the previous one was of an adult bird found dead.

NON-ACCEPTED REPORTS

Townsend's Warbler (*Setophaga townsendi*) (19-02) The committee considered a report consisting of written descriptions and field sketches of a possible Townsend's Warbler seen in *Mecklenburg* 22 September 2018 and voted not to accept (3-6). The committee commends the reporter for the field sketches, but ultimately found that the report did not eliminate species more expected for this part of the state and this time of year.

Sooty Shearwater (*Ardenna grisea*) (19-04) The NCBRC considered a written report of Sooty Shearwater in *Mecklenburg* following the passage of Hurricane Florence on 15 September 2018, ultimately voting not to accept (3-4, with 2 abstentions), due mainly to poor viewing conditions and the difficulty of ruling out similar species. The committee finds the observation compelling however, and has asked the observer to re-submit with additional details.

UNRESOLVED

Lazuli Bunting (*Passerina amoena*) (19-06). The NCBRC reviewed a written description and photos submitted by Patricia Finch of an apparent adult male Lazuli Bunting visiting a feeder in *Carteret* from 19-21 August 2019. The report received a majority of acceptance votes (7-2), with dissenting members noting the poor quality of the photos. Because the report received more than one non-acceptance votes, it requires review from outside the committee and subsequent re-voting on these outside reviews or any additional comments from the observers.

Lazuli Bunting (*Passerina amoena*) (19-14) A report of a male Lazuli Bunting from Salvo Day Use Area (*Dare*) on 19 October 2019 consisting of a written description was considered by the committee to accept (5-4), though not overwhelmingly so. Because the report received more than one non-acceptance votes, it requires review from outside the committee and subsequent re-voting on these outside reviews or any additional comments from the observers.

Summary

With this round of voting, Pacific Golden-Plover is added to the Definitive List. The total number of accepted species from North Carolina is now 485 (plus one over the final 2018 list) of which 471 are Definitive (plus one over the final 2018 list), two are considered Not Established, and 12 are Provisional (no change from the final 2018 list).

Literature Cited

LeGrand, H., J. Haire, N. Swick, and T. Howard. 2016. Birds of North Carolina: their Distribution and Abundance. http://ncbirds.carolinabirdclub.org/

Nesting Northern Saw-whet Owls (*Aegolius acadicus*) in the Southern Appalachian Mountains

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Introduction

The Northern Saw-whet Owl (*Aegolius acadicus*) is a common breeding species in forests of southern Canada and the northern United States, as well as in mountainous areas of the western United States and Mexico. In the eastern United States the presence of adult owls during the breeding season has been known for more than 75 years as far south as Great Smoky Mountains National Park in the Appalachian range in North Carolina and Tennessee (Stupka 1946, 1963). In North Carolina early indications of potential breeding occurred when chocolate-brown juveniles were found in July 1965 in the Great Balsam Mountains, twice in September 1965 in the Black Mountains, and in September 1972 on the Pisgah Ridge (Simpson 1974). However, no actual nests were found that far south until 1989 and 1992. In North Carolina the first nest was discovered in the Black Mountains in a flying squirrel box by Allen Boynton in summer 1989 (LeGrand 1990). The first nest in Tennessee was discovered in June 1992 in a nest box that D. Rad Mayfield and Dr. Fred Alsop had set up at Unaka Mountain (Mayfield and Alsop 1992). In 1995, and again from 1999 through 2001, nest boxes were placed at Unaka Mountain, Roan Mountain, and Grandfather Mountain by master's degree students at East Tennessee State University and Appalachian State University. In 1995 four nest boxes were occupied, three on Roan Mountain and one on Unaka Mountain, and two of these boxes fledged chicks (Barb 1995). From 1999 through 2001 a total of six boxes were occupied over the three year period, two on Roan Mountain and four on Grandfather Mountain, and four of these fledged chicks (Williams 2003).

Methods

In 2011 we began regularly monitoring Northern Saw-whet Owl nesting boxes built and installed by Simpson from 2007 through 2017. These boxes were placed at elevations from 1486 to 1905 meters (4874 to 6249 feet) in areas of the Southern Appalachians along the Great Balsam, Pisgah Ridge, and Black Mountain Ranges. Areas selected consisted predominantly of mixed Red Spruce (*Picea rubens*), Fraser Fir (*Abies fraseri*), and deciduous forest generally in close proximity to forest openings created by fires, logging, and tree loss as a result of Balsam Wooly Adelgids (*Adelges piceae*). Box locations were based on Northern Saw-whet Owl calling surveys conducted periodically since the 1960's by Simpson (Simpson 1968, 1971, 1974a, 1974b; Simpson and Range 1974; Simpson and Ruiz 1975). By 2015 there were 25 boxes throughout the three ranges. Because of research permit limitations, specific box locations are not identified. Some of the earlier boxes were single placements, but Canadian biologist Jean Pierre

Savard studying Saw-whet Owl breeding suggested placing these boxes in pairs (pers. comm.), so several were added to existing sites between 2011 and 2015, and in subsequent years boxes were paired at all new locations. Thus, in 2015 there were 11 sites with at least two boxes within 23 meters (75 feet) of each other and two locations with three or four boxes in close proximity. From 2008 to 2015 the boxes were checked, usually twice, during the nesting season (March-June) mainly by tapping on the boxes to see if any owls appeared in the entrance. In 2015 John Gerwin from the N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences loaned us a "tree peeper" camera, which is attached to a long pole and connected to a viewing monitor on the ground. This was a more effective method of checking boxes.

Results

Tapping on boxes, and later using the camera, we found no evidence of owls at any of the boxes until the last box checked during the 2015 season. On 26 April we found an adult owl in a box along the Pisgah Ridge. As this was our first occupied box and we had no way to determine where it was in the nesting cycle, extensive precautions were taken to avoid disturbing it further since the risk of nest abandonment increases when an owl is disturbed early in the nesting process (Rasmussen et al. 2008). On 10 May we returned to check the box, and a well-feathered chick appeared in the box entrance. We returned on 13 May, and a chick once again popped into the box entrance. With greater experience we discovered that this is a common behavior for chicks about to fledge (Fig. 1).

Figure 1. Chick near fledging in box

With revived hope for the 2016 season, we began monitoring boxes in mid-March of that year, once again using the "tree peeper" camera. Unexpectedly, we found an occupied box our first day in a different location from the previous year along the Pisgah Ridge. No other occupied boxes were found that month, but on 20 April, two were found in the Great Balsam Mountains, along with another occupied box along the Pisgah Ridge on 23 April. This last was the paired box of the one that was occupied in 2015. Boxes are rarely used by the same owl two successive years even when the box has been cleaned (Rasmussen et al. 2008). Finally, on 10 May a fifth occupied box was found in the Black Mountains. All of the occupied boxes were monitored regularly throughout the nesting season using the "tree peeper" camera and by placing motion activated wildlife cameras with night vision capability, borrowed from N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, on tree limbs near each box. The main object of

the night vision camera was to monitor the male bringing prey to the nest (Fig. 2), observe potential predator activity near the nest, and document fledging dates of chicks. As we repeatedly observed, the arriving adult typically landed on a branch near the box entrance and transferred the prey item from its talons to its bill before entering the box. Thus, abundant photos were obtained in areas where we correctly assumed the location of the landing branch. Four of the boxes monitored in 2016 fledged a total of 12 chicks. The fifth box was abandoned after the female incubated evidently infertile eggs for almost two months. Normal hatching occurs 27-29 days from egg-laying (Rasmussen et al. 2008).

Figure 2. Chick in box entrance watching adult with prey. Photo taken by motion-activated night vision camera.

Late in 2016 we installed eight additional boxes at four new locations, so during the 2017 season there were 33 boxes in 15 potential territories. Once again, in 2017 we found five occupied boxes, all in the same areas as the previous year. However, the box in the Black Mountains was found abandoned with two eggs in it on the day it was discovered. Another in the Balsam Mountains was found with a female sitting on three eggs on 20 April, but the nest was abandoned by 2 May. On 18 May we found the paired box at this location occupied with a female sitting on eggs. By 21 June this box was also abandoned. Interestingly, this was the same box that was abandoned the previous year.

The remaining three occupied boxes, two on the Pisgah Ridge and one in the Great Balsam Mountains, all fledged chicks, five from the Pisgah Ridge boxes and one from the Balsam Mountains box. Motion activated cameras were also set up during the nesting cycle at two of the three successful nest sites, and many additional photos were obtained.

Late in 2017 we installed a pair of boxes at another new location, so at the beginning of the 2018 season there were 35 boxes in 16 locations along the three ranges. The 2018 breeding season was quite unusual. April was a very cold month and precipitation in May was well above average. The atypical weather may have had an effect on nesting. We started checking boxes in February, but the first occupied box was not found until 1 April on the Pisgah Ridge in the same area that owls had successfully nested the previous three years. Five eggs hatched from this box, but about two weeks after the last chick had hatched out, on 21 May at 5:17a.m., a Long-tailed Weasel (*Mustela frenata*) was caught on the wildlife camera raiding the box (Fig. 3). As no feathers were found in the box when it was later examined, it is possible that at least some of the chicks managed to escape, but also probable that at least the two youngest owlets were carried off. No photos were obtained of either the weasel or any owls coming out of the box because the reaction time of the wildlife camera is not fast enough to catch rapidly moving objects. This was not the first time a weasel had been caught entering a box. During the 2016 season a long-tailed weasel was caught on camera entering one of the owl boxes, but at the time the box was occupied by a Northern Flying Squirrel (*Glaucomys sabrinus*), which the weasel was seen carrying off. This is the only predator species caught on camera entering any of the owl boxes. Red Squirrels were frequently caught on camera near all of the boxes, but never near the box entrance while it was occupied by an owl, possibly because the female never leaves the box during the day and repeatedly snaps its bill when disturbed. By the time the female finally leaves the nest permanently about two weeks before the chicks fledge, the chicks are old enough to snap their bills when disturbed.

Figure 3. Long-tailed Weasel entering owl box.
Photo taken by motion-activated night vision camera.

As it was already late in the nesting season, based on previous experience, we were not expecting further nesting activity in 2018, but on 24 May we found two occupied boxes in the Great Balsam Mountains. One of these was in the same area where owls had abandoned nests in 2016 and 2017. In this box we found a female sitting on four eggs, but as in previous years, by 20 June it had been abandoned once again. The eggs were collected from this box in July. The other occupied Balsam Mountains box, also in one of the same areas used the previous two years, was found with four eggs. Three of the eggs hatched, and two chicks successfully fledged from this box. A night vision camera placed at this site again took numerous photos of the male bringing in prey.

The 2019 season was somewhat disappointing. After checking the boxes in March, April, and early May, we had almost given up hope until we finally found an occupied box on 22 May. This was one of the boxes installed at a new location along the Pisgah Ridge in November 2016. As the female in this box refused to budge whenever we checked with the "tree peeper" camera, we were unable to determine the number of eggs, or even the number of eggs that hatched. Not until 19 June were we able to see the contents of the box when the banding crew came to band the female. Even then she refused to get off the nest, and the assistant banders had to open the top and physically remove her. At that time the nest held two chicks that were between one and two weeks old. Both chicks fledged by early July. This box was also the only other one where we observed attempted predation caught on the motion-activated camera, this time by a large Black Bear (*Ursus americanus*). The bear could reach the box entrance with its nose, but was unable to pull it down (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Black bear inspecting occupied box

The 2020 season started well with two occupied boxes found on 15 April, both along the Pisgah Ridge. One occupied box was in an area where boxes have been occupied almost every year, and the other was the paired box of the one that was occupied the previous year. Unfortunately, we were unable to check boxes again until 15 May because of road closures as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, but the day the road reopened we found another occupied box in the Balsam Mountains at another traditionally successful location. By then the first two boxes were well along. Three chicks fledged from one of them, but the other was raided by a predator about two weeks before probable fledge date, probably shortly after the female left the box. As there was no camera focused on this box, the identity of the predator raiding the nest is unknown. At the third box in the Balsam Mountains the female sat on six eggs, but once the eggs started hatching she would not leave the box under any circumstances, so we were unable to tell how many actually hatched, although we know that one egg definitely did not hatch and we could see at least two chicks under her. It was probably a week after the female left the box that we were able to check it again, and at that time there were two feathered chicks. These chicks fledged between 6 and 9 July.

Our goal in this study has not just been to obtain data on Saw-whet Owl nesting behavior, but to ensure that nesting owls are as successful as they might be if left undisturbed. Thus, to avoid potential nest abandonment, once we discovered an occupied box we did not return again for at least a week. We also never opened any boxes during the nesting period except when banding and measuring chicks and adults. We relied on the "tree peeper" camera, the night vision motion activated cameras, and observation from the ground for all data while owls were in the box. This often meant forfeiting obtaining exact data on egg numbers, and possibly even the exact numbers of chicks hatched. Information was missed in some cases because of the varying behavior of the female owl sitting on the nest. Females remain in the box constantly from the time the eggs are laid until all of the chicks in the box are sufficiently feathered to maintain body heat (Rasmussen et al. 2008). This typically occurs about two weeks after hatching. During the time there are eggs or young chicks in the nest, the male does all of the feeding of female and chicks. Females exhibited a wide variety of reactions to nest disturbance ranging from two birds that refused to leave the nest box under any circumstances, to those that would jump into the entrance when approached, but would back down into the box when the "tree peeper" camera was inserted, to those that would flee to a nearby tree at the mere sight of the "tree peeper" camera. Since some females would not leave the nest it was often difficult to see what they were covering, so the actual number of eggs or chicks was sometimes difficult to determine until she left the box permanently about two weeks after the last egg hatched (Figure 5). However, valuable data were obtained from use of the "tree peeper" cameras, night vision cameras, and from analyzing the remains left in the boxes after the chicks had fledged. Once females leave a nest they do not return to keep it clean, so pellets from the chicks remain in the box and can be analyzed for prey bones. Much of this data is still being analyzed. However, some initial findings are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1:

	2016	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**
# boxes occupied	5	5	3	1	3
Approximate egg laying dates	Mid-March to late April	Early April to mid-May	Early April to late May	Mid-May	Mid-March to mid-May
Approximate # eggs per nest	3 - 5	3 - 4	4 - 5	?	3 - 6
Approximate hatch dates	Mid-April to late May	Early to mid-May*	Early May to mid-June	Early June	Mid-April to mid-June
Approximate # eggs hatched per nest	2 - 5	3 - 4	3 - 5	2?	At least 2
Approximate date female departs nest	Late April to mid-June	Mid to late May	Mid-May to early July	Mid to late June	Late June
Approximate fledge dates	Mid-May to late June	Early to mid-June	Late May to late July	Early July	Mid-May to 9 July
# chicks fledged per nest	2 - 4	1 - 3	2 - ?**	2	2
Total # of chicks fledged	12	6	2 - ?**	2	4
# nest failures	1	2	1	0	1

*later nests failed

**uncertain as some may have fledged from raided nest

Prey item analysis is incomplete, but thus far most common prey items found on camera and in box remains include:

- Deer Mouse *(Peromyscus maniculatus)*
- Southern Red-backed Vole (*Clethrionomys gapperi*)
- Woodland Jumping Mouse (*Napaeozapus insignis*)
- Northern Short-tailed Shrew *(Blarina brevicauda)*
- Smoky Shrew (*Sorex fumeus*)
- Masked Shrew (*Sorex cinereus*)

A small number of probable Dark-eyed Juncos (*Junco hyemalis*) were also found. Prey items are being identified by Alan Smith, retired, Biology Department, Mars Hill University.

Figure 5. Female covering either eggs or very young chicks. Leftover prey item in box. Photo taken with IBWO (new "tree peeper" type camera).

In the past three years John Gerwin from the N.C. State Museum of Natural Sciences and his assistants have also banded and/or measured five adult females and 15 chicks. Thus far none of the banded birds have been recaptured. As additional capturing and measuring occurs in coming years this data will also be made available.

This is a very preliminary summary of some of the information thus far obtained from this study. The analysis continues, and additional study of existing data and that from future years will provide critical information on the breeding activities of Saw-whet Owls in the Southern Appalachians. There are many unanswered questions including: causes of nest failure, potential nest predation, the relationship between prey items and prey abundance and the relationship between prey abundance and nest success, site fidelity, reasons for unhatched eggs or chick death and the fate of chicks when they die in the nest (are they removed by the parent or eaten by siblings), the effects of weather on nest success, what are the effects of climate change, and many others. For these reasons this study will hopefully continue for many more years. Also, to date, we are not aware

of any natural cavity nests having been found or reported in the Southern Appalachians, and this will continue to be another challenge.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to John Gerwin and his student assistants for banding adult owls and chicks, Alan Smith for analyzing the box remains, Chris Kelly and Clifton Avery from the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission for the loan of wildlife cameras and assistance installing boxes, and retired Park Service ecologists Nora Murdock and Robert Emmott for their frequent assistance monitoring boxes.

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BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

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(All dates Spring 2020, unless otherwise noted)

Briefs for the Files is a seasonal collection of uncommon-to-rare or unusual North and South Carolina bird sightings and events which do not necessarily require a more detailed Field Note or article. Reports of your sightings are due the 20th of the month after the end of the previous season.

Winter	*December 1–February 28*	*due March 20*
Spring	*March 1–May 31*	*due June 20*
Summer	*June 1–July 31*	*due August 20*
Fall	*August 1–November 30*	*due December 20*

Reports may be submitted in any format, but I prefer that you use email, list multiple sightings in taxonomic order (rather than by date or location), and type your report directly into the body of the email. If your sightings are in a file, please copy-and-paste the text into the body of the email, rather than sending an attachment.

Suitable reports for the Briefs include any sightings you feel are unusual, rare, noteworthy, or just plain interesting to you in any way! It is my responsibility to decide which reports merit inclusion in the Briefs.

Please be sure to include details of any rare or hard-to-identify birds.

I rely in part on sightings reported in Carolinabirds. Please don't, however, rely on me to pick up your sightings from Carolinabirds. Instead, please also send your sightings directly to me as described above.

If I feel that your sighting warrants a Field Note, I will contact either you or the appropriate state Field Notes editor. You may, of course, submit your Field Note directly to the editor without going through me.

Abbreviations: **BRC** – Bird Records Committee, **et al.** – and others, **Ft** – Fort, **Ln** – Lane, **m. obs.** – multiple observers, **NC** – North Carolina, **NF** – National Forest, **NWR** – National Wildlife Refuge, **Rd** – Road, **SC** – South Carolina, **SP** – State Park, **WMA** – Wildlife Management Area, **WTP** – Water Treatment Plant

All italicized place names are counties.

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck: This species continues to expand its range northward and inland. Sightings made at sites near the NC coast included nine on Oak Island *Brunswick* 23 May (Mark Whitaker) three on a pond in the Wyndwater community in *Pender* 28 Apr (Carson Wood), seven just north of New Bern *Craven* 17 May (Suzy Jastram), eight at Alligator River NWR *Dare* 23 May (*fide* Ed Corey) and six there later that day (Al Hooks, m. obs.), six at North River Preserve *Carteret* 24 May (John Fussell, Steve Howell), two near Gull Rock Game Land *Hyde* 26 May (Corey), and two on a pond in Merritt *Pamlico* 28-30 May (Frank & Terry Elshaug, Christine Stoughton-Root). Far inland in NC were 12 on Lookout Shoals Lake *Catawba* 26 Apr (Monroe Pannell), seven on the pond next to the Orange County Sportsplex *Orange* 6 May (Roy MacDonald, m. obs.), one on Ecusta Pond *Transylvania* 19 May (Michael Plauché, m. obs.), and one at McAlpine Creek Park *Mecklenburg* 31 May (Catherine Horton, m. obs.). A leg-banded individual seen at Lake Johnson *Wake* NC 8 Apr (Johnny Wilson, m. obs.) and, probably the same individual, at nearby Lake Wheeler 11 Apr (Steve Shultz) likely escaped from captivity.

Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks, 6 May 20, Orange Co, NC. Photo by David Fischer.

Ross's Goose: One seen around a small pond along Buffalo Church Rd in *Cleveland* NC 16 Apr and 23 Apr (Bill Hooker) was late to depart.

Greater White-fronted Goose: One lingered with Canada Geese around a farm pond just west of Winston-Salem *Forsyth* NC until 8 May (Mike Conway).

Cackling Goose: One seen and photographed at Lake Junaluska *Haywood* NC 23 Apr and 26 Apr (Zachary Gavett) was very late.

Tundra Swan: Lingering into May were four in the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR *Washington* NC 9 May (Heather Russell), two at Mattamuskeet NWR *Hyde* NC 16 May (Ed Corey, et al.), one in the Campbell Creek Impoundment *Beaufort* NC 31 May (Caleb Bronsink), and one at Mackay Island NWR *Currituck* NC 31 May (Conor Farrell).

Garganey: Pending review by the SC BRC is the report of an adult female Garganey at Russell Burgess Coastal Preserve *Horry* SC 2 Mar (Steve Patterson). If accepted, the report would provide SC with its first record of this eurasian duck.

Mottled Duck: One photographed at a small pond along Old Georgetown Rd in *Brunswick* NC 20 Mar (David Wilson) was unusual for NC.

Greater Scaup: Individuals at Dobbins Farm *Anderson* SC 13-15 May (Timothy Carstens, m. obs.) and on Lake Julian *Buncombe* NC 22 May (Vicky Burke) were late.

White-winged Scoter: One on Lake Julian *Buncombe* NC 1-16 Mar (Clifton Avery, m. obs.) was a good find for an inland site.

Bufflehead: One seen and photographed at Dobbins Farm *Anderson* SC 21-30 May (April Childress, m. obs.) was late.

Common Merganser: Breeding was confirmed on the South Toe River in *Yancey* NC when a hen was seen with seven juveniles 16 May (Emma Little, et al.). Suggestive of attempted breeding at sites in the NC mountains were reports of pairs on the Watauga River just north of Valle Crucis *Watauga* 15 Mar through 5 Apr (Steve Dowlan, m. obs.), on the Tuckasegee River near Dillsboro *Jackson* 15 Mar through 19 Apr (Megan Eberly, m. obs.), on the Johns River in *Caldwell* 18 Apr (Caroline Martin), and on the Little River in *Alleghany* 19 May (Patsy Bailey). Breeding in the NC mountain region was first documented along the Green River *Polk* in June 2011 and has since been documented along several other rivers.

Ruddy Duck: Thirteen at the Goldsboro WTP *Wayne* NC 30 May (Eric Dean) was a notable count for such a late date.

Ruffed Grouse: A moribund individual found along SC-130 northeast of Seneca *Oconee* SC 8 Mar (Pam Ford, Craig Watson) was very unusual for a site outside of the mountains.

Horned Grebe: One seen at the mouth of Pembroke Creek in Edenton *Chowan* NC 24 May (Kathy Miller) was late.

Red-necked Grebe: Sightings involved one on Lake Townsend *Guilford* NC 8 Mar (Henry & Elizabeth Link) intermittently through 2 May (m. obs.), two on Lake Murray *Lexington* SC 21-25 Mar (Zach Steinhauser, m. obs.) with one remaining until 5 Apr (Steinhauser), one on the Pamlico Sound in Rodanthe *Dare* NC 9-19 May (Karen Lebing, m. obs.), and one at the Goldsboro WTP *Wayne* NC 20 May (Eric Dean). The latter two sightings were also rather late.

Western Grebe: One was seen on the Currituck Sound in Duck *Dare* NC 15 Mar (Erin & Tim Metcalf).

White-winged Dove: Individuals were seen in the Pamlico Plantation community in *Beaufort* NC 20-22 Apr (Frank Phelps, m. obs.) and in the Nantahala NF *Jackson* NC 16 May (William Kee).

Yellow Rail: One seen and photographed after being flushed from a flooded field along Ardrey Kell Rd in southern *Mecklenburg* NC 30 Apr (Matt Janson, Martina Nordstrand, m. obs.) was very unusual for a site in the Piedmont.

Virginia Rail: One seen along the Boone Greenway at Clawson-Burnley Park *Watauga* NC 30 Apr through 10 May (Mary Olson, Steve Dowlan, m. obs.) was very unusual for the NC High Country.

Sora: Individuals heard at the pond on top of Shortoff Mountain *Burke* NC 1 May (Clifton Avery, Noah Poulos) and photographed at Cane River Park *Yancey* NC 9-10 May (Grant Buckner, m. obs.) were unusual for those areas of the mountain region.

Purple Gallinule: One photographed along Lighthouse Rd in Buxton *Dare* NC 28 Apr (*fide* Michael Gosselin) was a great find for NC. Farthest north in SC were two at Lake Busbee *Horry* 22 Apr (Ritch Lilly).

Limpkin: Sightings, increasing the past few years, included two continuing at the north end of Goose Creek Reservoir *Berkeley* SC throughout the spring (m. obs.), one continuing in the Sun City Hilton Head community *Beaufort* SC 24 Mar (Tom Brim), two where the Congaree River empties into Lake Marion *Calhoun* SC, near its border with *Clarendon* and *Sumter*, 1 Apr (Cathy Mathias), one near Salley *Orangeburg* SC 30 Apr (Whit Gibbons), and one in the Combahee Unit of ACE Basin NWR *Beaufort* SC 3 May (Deborah & Jeff Kidd).

Sandhill Crane: Twelve in flight over southwestern *Clay* NC 7 Mar (Sandy Benson) was the highest count made this spring.

Black-necked Stilt: Five at Horse Creek WTP *Aiken* SC 2 May (Lois Stacey) were unusual for a site so far from the coast.

American Golden-Plover: Sightings involved one at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access) *Jasper* SC 31 Mar (Steve Calver), one along Hooper Ln *Henderson* NC 13 Apr (Mike Resch, et al.), up to three at Dobbins Farm *Anderson* SC 18 Apr (Brad Dalton, m. obs.), one along Hooper Ln 23-24 Apr (Wayne Forsythe, m. obs.), one at the Cedar Island Ferry Terminal *Carteret* NC 29 Apr (Steve Howell), one at the Simpson Research Station *Anderson* SC 13 May (Steve Patterson), and five at Dobbins Farm 13 May (George McHenry, m. obs.).

Piping Plover: One seen and photographed along Hooper Ln *Henderson* NC 15 Apr (Vicky Burke, m. obs.) was only the fourth ever documented in the mountain region.

Upland Sandpiper: Sightings involved three at sod farms along Wilson Rd in *Transylvania* NC 12 Apr (Michael Plauché, m. obs.), two to three along Hooper Ln *Henderson* NC 14 Apr (Tim Novak, m. obs.), one along Mid-Pines Rd *Wake* NC 22 Apr (Rob Rybczynski, m. obs.), two at Anderson Regional Airport *Anderson* SC 22 (Steve Patterson, m. obs.) with one remaining until 28 Apr (Matthew Campbell, et al.), one at Beaver Lake *Buncombe* NC 26 Apr (Aaron Steed, m. obs.), and two at Dobbins Farm *Anderson* SC 4-7 May (Patterson, m. obs.).

Whimbrel: Thirteen at Lake Crabtree *Wake* NC 19 May (Harry LeGrand, Marc Ribaudo, m. obs.) was a remarkable count for a site away from the coast. Individuals photographed at turf farms along Wilson Rd in *Transylvania* NC 20 May (Nathaniel Axtell, Michael Plauché) and along Hooper Ln *Henderson* NC 21 May (Kevin Burke, m. obs.) were great finds for the mountain region. All three sightings followed the passage of Tropical Storm Arthur.

Long-billed Curlew: One was photographed along Taylor Creek at the Rachel Carson Reserve *Carteret* NC 22 Apr and 1 May (Lisa Tucci).

Ruddy Turnstone: Twenty-seven along Hooper Ln *Henderson* NC following the passage of Tropical Storm Arthur 20 May (Todd Arcos, m. obs.) was an amazing count for a site away from the coast. One at the Goldsboro WTP *Wayne* NC 24 May (Ricky Davis) was the only other inland sighting made this spring.

Ruff: One seen and photographed at Santee Coastal Reserve *Charleston* SC 19 Mar (Ritch Lilly) was a great find.

Sanderling: Sightings at inland sites following the passage of Tropical Storm Arthur included eight at Jordan Lake *Chatham* NC 20 May (Jonathan Cantrell), one at Falls Lake *Durham* NC 21 May (Ed Corey, m. obs.), and one along Hooper Ln *Henderson* NC 22 May (Kevin Burke).

Dunlin: Sightings were made at multiple inland sites following the passage of Tropical Storm Arthur. A few of the higher counts were 22 along Moores Mill Rd in northern *Durham* NC 19 May (Matt Lawing), up to 66 at Lake Crabtree *Wake* NC 19 May (m. obs.), 18 in a plowed field in southwestern *Orange* NC 20 May (Jan Hansen), and 14 along Middleton Loop in *Stokes* NC 21 May (Jesse Anderson).

Pectoral Sandpiper: Two seen along Hooper Ln *Henderson* NC 4 Mar (Mike Resch, m. obs.) were somewhat early while one photographed at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 30 May (Will Bennett) was somewhat late.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: Two at Lake Junaluska *Haywood* NC 11 May (Stan & Connie Wulkowicz, Vince Kloster, et al.), two at Brookshire Park *Watauga* NC 21 May (Sheryl McNair, m. obs.), and eight at Brookshire Park 23 May (Richard Gray, m. obs.) were unusual for those areas of the mountain region.

Short-billed Dowitcher: Sightings made in the NC mountain region included two along Hooper Ln *Henderson* 23 Apr (Wayne Forsyhte, m. obs.), one at Bass Lake *Watauga* 11 May (Guy McGrane), eight at Lake Junaluska *Haywood* 11 May (Stan & Connie Wulkowicz, Vince Kloster, et al.), two at Owen Park *Buncombe* 11 May (Clifton Avery, m. obs.), and up to nine along Hooper Ln 20 May (Todd Arcos, m. obs.).

Long-billed Dowitcher: Individuals seen and photographed along W Clemmonsville Rd in *Forsyth* NC 26-27 Apr (John Haire, m. obs.) and in Brevard *Transylvania* NC 30 Apr (Nathaniel Axtell, et al.) were good finds for those inland sites.

Willet: There was an appreciable fallout of migrants in the western half of our region in late April, with 30 at Lake Junaluska *Haywood* NC 23 Apr (Vince Kloster), eight at Jackson Park *Henderson* NC 26 Apr (Bill Hooker, m. obs.), five along the Watauga River northwest of Valle Crucis *Watauga* NC 26 Apr (Max Ramey, m. obs.), two at W Kerr Scott Reservoir *Wilkes* NC 26 Apr (Guy McGrane), two at Riverbend Park *Catawba* NC 27 Apr (Dwayne Martin, Lori Owenby), and four at Richard B Russell Lake *Abbeville* SC 30 Apr (Steve Patterson, m. obs.). Eight at Lake Junaluska 11 May (Stan & Connie Wulkowicz, et al.) were also notable.

Wilson's Phalarope: Individuals were seen at Dobbins Farm *Anderson* SC 9-17 Mar (George McHenry, m. obs.), where NC-191 crosses the French Broad River in *Henderson* NC 8-10 May (Mike Resch, m. obs.), and at Masonboro Inlet *New Hanover* NC 12-21 May (Dave Hart, m. obs.).

Red-necked Phalarope: One at the Hemingway WTP *Williamsburg* SC 15 May (Jay Chandler, m. obs.) was a good find. The passage of two tropical weather systems in late May resulted in sightings of wayward migrants at multiple sites. Those sightings included four at Lake Crabtree *Wake* NC 19-23 May (m. obs.), eight at Lake Crabtree 20 May (Ed Corey), one where Lindsey Bridge Rd crosses the Dan River in *Rockingham* NC 20-21 May (Marty Wall, m. obs.), one at Cape Point Campground *Dare* NC 20-22 May (Camron Robertson, m. obs.), one where Mebane Bridge Rd crosses the Dan River in *Rockingham* NC 21 May (Wall, m. obs.), one at Dobbins Farm *Anderson* SC 21 May (Steve Patterson, m. obs.), one along Mid-Pines Rd *Wake* NC 21 May (Ann Stinely), one at the Goldsboro WTP *Wayne* NC 24 May (Ricky Davis), one at the Mills River WTP *Henderson* NC 26 May (Kevin Burke), one at Huntington Beach SP *Georgetown* SC 27 May (Frank Lawkins, m. obs.), two on Oak Hollow Lake *Guilford* NC 27 May (Henry Link, et al.), and four on Oak Hollow Lake 28 May (Andrew Thornton, m. obs.).

Red-necked Phalaropes, 22 May 20, Wake Co, NC. Photo by David Fischer.

South Polar Skua: One was seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 27 May (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

Parasitic Jaeger: Four off Johnnie Mercer's Pier *New Hanover* NC 5 Apr (Sam Cooper) was a good count.

Long-tailed Jaeger: Individuals were seen on pelagic trips out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 2 Jun and 6 Jun (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

Black-headed Gull: One at Lake Crabtree *Wake* NC 18 Apr (Susan Campbell, Steve Shultz) was very unusual for a site so far from the coast.

Laughing Gull: Sightings were made at six sites in the western half of our region following the passage of Tropical Storm Arthur 18-21 May including seven on Oak Hollow Lake *Guilford* NC 21 May (Andrew Thornton, et al.).

Herring Gull: Individuals were seen as far west as Lake Julian *Buncombe* NC and Hooper Ln *Henderson* NC 20-22 May, following the passage of Tropical Storm Arthur.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: Buckhorn Reservoir in *Wilson* NC 8 Mar provided an amazing inland count of 310 (Ricky Davis), while 36 at Jordan Lake *Chatham* NC 4 Apr (Robert Rybczynski) was a notable count for that inland site. Three at Jordan Lake 21 May (Matt Spangler) were quite late for a site away from the coast.

Glaucous Gull: Immature individuals were photographed on the beach in North Myrtle Beach *Horry* SC 15 Mar (Lauren Vaughn, et al.), at Ft Fisher *New Hanover* NC 9 May (Will Taber, et al.), and in Nags Head *Dare* NC 13 May (Marissa Bijarro).

Caspian Tern: One photographed at Lake Wylie *Mecklenburg* NC 22 Mar (Jeffrey Turner) was somewhat early for an inland site.

White-winged Tern: Pending review by the NC BRC is the report of an apparent adult White-winged Tern seen and photographed around the Salt Pond at Cape Point *Dare* NC 26 May (David Fischer, Steve Howell) and 28 May (Jasmin Beachy, Ruben & Victor Stoll) through 2 Jun (m. obs.). If accepted, the report would become the second official record for NC and the first with photographs.

Apparent White-winged Tern, 28 Apr 20, Dare Co, NC. Photo by David Fischer

Roseate Tern: One to two were seen at sites around Cape Point *Dare* NC 6 May into summer (Michael Gosselin, m. obs.). One photographed at Mason Inlet *New Hanover* NC 12 May (Dave Hart) was very unusual for that area of the coast.

Arctic Tern: Pending review by the NC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent Arctic Tern on Oak Hollow Lake *Guilford* NC 21 May, following the passage of Tropical Storm Arthur (Andrew Thornton, m. obs.). If accepted, the report would provide the sixth record for the Piedmont and first for that county.

White-tailed Tropicbird: Two adults were seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 29 May (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

Red-billed Tropicbird: One was briefly seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 2 Jun (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

Pacific Loon: Two continued off Johnnie Mercer's Pier *New Hanover* NC from February through 8 Apr (Jim Holcomb). The individual first reported on Lake Jocassee at Devil's Fork SP *Oconee* SC 28 Feb (Jay Mager, Nina Schoch, et al.) remained through 8 Mar (Simon Harvey, Shawn Smolen-Morton). Individuals photographed on Lake Hartwell from Sadler's Creek SP *Anderson* SC 10 Mar (Andy Norris, Steve Patterson) and on Lake Murray *Richland* SC 15 Mar (Irvin Pitts, et al.) may have been the same individual seen on Lake Jocassee. All reports of this species in SC require review by the BRC.

Wilson's Storm-Petrel: Eighty-one around Cape Point *Dare* NC 28 May (Ed Corey, Kyle Kittelberger) was a notable count from shore.

Trindade Petrel: This rare tubenose was seen on five of the eight pelagic trips out of Hatteras *Dare* NC this spring, with three on 27 May, one on 31 May, four on 1 Jun, two on 2 Jun, and one on 6 Jun (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

Fea's Petrel: Individuals were seen on pelagic trips out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 1 Jun and 6 Jun (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

Cory's Shearwater: One hundred fifty-five around Cape Point *Dare* NC 28 May (Ed Corey, Kyle Kittelberger) was a notable count from shore.

Audubon's Shearwater: A pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* on NC 30 May (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.) tallied 307, a notable count for spring.

Magnificent Frigatebird: Individuals were seen over five sites along the coast from Hilton Head Island *Beaufort* SC north to Ocean Isle Beach *Brunswick* NC 22-30 May.

Masked Booby: A sub-adult was seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 5 Jun (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

Neotropic Cormorant: Pending review by the NC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent adult Neotropic Cormorant at Crosswinds Marina on Jordan Lake *Chatham* NC 9-10 Apr (Jelmer Poelstra, m. obs.). If accepted, the report would become the first record of the species anywhere in the Carolinas.

Great Cormorant: Interestingly, two distinct individuals were seen on the Savannah River this period—the first-winter bird at the dam on J. Strom Thurmond Lake *McCormick* SC continuing from late fall through 15 Mar (Jerry Griggs) and an adult at the dam on Richard B Russell Lake *Abbeville* SC 10 Mar through 3 Apr (Mark McShane, m. obs.). Both reports are pending review by the SC BRC.

Anhinga: Individuals at Chester SP *Chester* SC 27 Mar (Steve Patterson), on Lake Brandt *Guilford* NC 20 May (Elizabeth Link, m. obs.), and in the Little River Swamp along SC-201 *Abbeville* SC 29 May (Patterson, m. obs.) were the farthest inland reported this spring.

American White Pelican: Sightings continued around High Rock Dam *Davidson* and *Rowan* NC from late winter until 3 Apr (Steve Coggin). Other inland sightings included six on Jordan Lake *Chatham* NC 24 Mar (Matt Spangler), nine at Belews Lake *Rockingham* NC 6 Apr (Marty Wall), seven at South Cove County Park *Oconee* SC 25 Apr (Stephen Schutt), 19 over Riverbend Park *Catawba* NC 2 May (Dwayne Martin), one at the dam on Lake Hartwell *Anderson* SC 11 May (George McHenry), and one at Lake Brandt *Guilford* NC 20-22 May (Andrew Thornton, Matt Wangerin, m. obs.).

Least Bittern: Inland sightings included one seen at Beaver Lake *Buncombe* NC 11 May (Aaron Steed, m. obs.), one seen at the former quarry site in Dyers Hill *Marlboro* SC 12-15 May (Mac Williams, m. obs.), and one to two heard at Flat River Waterfowl Impoundment *Durham* NC 18 May through 3 Jun (Matt Lawing, m. obs.), one seen in a flooded field along Ardrey Kell Rd in southern *Mecklenburg* NC 19 May (Greg Hays, et al.), and one heard at Chantilly Park in Charlotte *Mecklenburg* NC 30 May through 2 Jun (Larry King, m. obs.).

Little Blue Heron: A first-spring bird at Berkeley Ball Park in Hendersonville *Henderson* NC 3-8 May (Nolan Wright, m. obs.) was unusual for the mountain region in spring.

Tricolored Heron: One photographed at Macedonia Lake *Wake* NC 15 May (Karla Schmidt) was a good find for an inland site in spring.

White Ibis: Twenty-eight in flight over Lake Twitty *Union* NC following the passage of Tropical Storm Bertha 28 May (Dennis Kent) was a notable count for the Piedmont in spring.

Glossy Ibis: Sightings were made at seven sites in the Greater Triangle area between 24 Apr and 10 May, including six over Mason Farm Biological Reserve *Orange* NC 5 May (Jan Hansen).

Roseate Spoonbill: One seen at Dobbins Farm *Anderson* SC 31 May (Daniel Cribb) was very unusual for a site so far inland in spring. While inland sightings have increased in recent years, almost all have been made in the summer or early fall.

Tropical Kingbird: Pending review by the NC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent Tropical Kingbird on the southern Core Banks *Carteret* NC 4 May (Sean Leahy, Dawn Lloyd). If accepted, the report would provide the fifth record for NC and the first from the spring period.

Gray Kingbird: One was photographed on a powerline near the entrance to the Sullivan's Island Nature Trail *Charleston* SC 6 May (Elizabeth Anderegg, et al.).

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher: One seen along Jenkins Farm Rd on Johns Island *Charleston* SC 15-21 Mar (Mike Harhold, m. obs.) was likely the same individual seen at that site 19 Jan. Pairs returned to traditional nesting sites near the intersection of Farm Camp Rd and Webber Rd in western *Cherokee* SC 10 May (Christy Hill) and near the Rock Hill-York County Airport *York* SC 24 May (Allen Wolford). A pair seen along Thompson Creek Rd near Boiling Springs *Spartanburg* SC 2 May into June (*fide* Matthew Campbell, m. obs.) may have been attempting to nest there.

Olive-sided Flycatcher: Individuals were reported at eight sites in NC, three in the Piedmont and five in the mountains, between 5 May and 24 May.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: One photographed and audio-recorded calling at Brumley Nature Preserve *Orange* NC 12 May (Jelmer Poelstra) was a good find for spring.

White-eyed Vireo: One photographed along the Little Tennessee River Greenway *Macon* NC 18 Mar (Timothy Carstens) was somewhat early for the mountain region.

Warbling Vireo: East of the species' typical breeding range was one singing as if on territory in the Crabtree Creek Wetland *Wake* NC 1 May (Gerry Luginbuhl) and two singing there 15 May into June (Karla Schmidt, m. obs.).

Black-whiskered Vireo: One was photographed along the Duck Park Boardwalk *Dare* NC 1 May (Jeff Lewis).

Cliff Swallow: Eight hundred twenty along the Broad River in northern *Cherokee* SC 9 May (David & Timothy Campbell) was a notable count.

Cave Swallow: Pending review by the NC BRC is the report with photographs of a Cave Swallow at Ecusta Pond *Transylvania* NC 26 Mar (Nathaniel Axtell, Bob Butler, Michael Plauché, Martine Stolk). This sighting was quite atypical because most are made at sites along or near the coast in the late fall or early winter. If accepted, the report would provide the first record of this species in the mountain region.

Brown-headed Nuthatch: One photographed at a feeder in Boone *Watauga* NC 26-27 May (Pat Geiger, m. obs.) was extremely unusual for the NC High Country.

Bicknell's Thrush: A "probable" Bicknell's Thrush was well-studied at close range along the Black River in *Bladen* NC 28 Apr (Derb Carter). This thrush is extremely

difficult, if not impossible, to definitively distinguish from the closely-related Gray-cheeked Thrush in the field without one in-hand to make measurements.

Bachman's Sparrow: One seen at Landsford Canal SP *Chester* SC 19 Mar (Matt Janson) was unusual for that area.

Lark Sparrow: Individuals continued from winter at Ezell Farm Community Park *Mecklenburg* NC until 14 Apr (Steven Fasciana) and at feeders along Alder Branch Rd in *Camden* NC until 22 Apr (James Harrison). One photographed at a feeder in Burlington *Alamance* NC 6 Mar (Marisa Shelton) was a possible first for that county. This species likely nested in drop zones on Ft Bragg in northern *Hoke* NC in late May, as a female was seen carrying food 25 May and a pair was seen together 31 May (Sam Simon).

Clay-colored Sparrow: Individuals photographed along the Little Tennessee River Greenway *Macon* NC 18 Apr (Timothy Carstens) and in the Thornburg Tract of Uwharrie NF *Randolph* NC 21-22 Apr (Ben Nickley, m. obs.) were good finds for spring. This species was seen at North River Preserve *Carteret* NC on three dates in April, with a high count of three there 19 Apr (John Fussell, Steve Howell).

LeConte's Sparrow: One photographed at the Voice of America site in *Beaufort* NC 28 Apr (Trevor Sleight, m. obs.) was the only one reported this spring.

Nelson's Sparrow: Individual migrants in Fletcher *Henderson* NC 30 Mar (Vicky Burke) and 26 Apr (Kevin Burke) were good finds away from the coast.

Henslow's Sparrow: Twenty-six at the Voice of America site in *Beaufort* NC 17 Apr (Trevor Sleight) was a notable count.

Lincoln's Sparrow: About a dozen were reported this spring, all in NC, most at sites in the Piedmont and mountains, and most between 27 Apr and 13 May.

Yellow-breasted Chat: One photographed at Martin Marietta Park *Craven* NC 1 Mar (Caleb Bronsink) must have over-wintered in the area as it was still too early for a returning spring migrant.

Yellow-headed Blackbird: An adult male that visited a yard in Waves *Dare* NC 9-10 May (Karen Lebing, m. obs.) was the only one reported this spring.

Orchard Oriole: An immature male seen in a yard in Wilmington *New Hanover* NC 17 Feb (Maria Bernwinkler) and photographed 12 Mar (Jamie Adams) was extremely unusual so early in the year.

Bronzed Cowbird: Pending review by the NC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent male Bronzed Cowbird under a feeder in James City *Craven* NC 4 May and 9 May (Ronnie Hewlette). This report is the second made of this species in NC this year.

Brewer's Blackbird: Sightings involved three in the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR *Washington* NC 1 Mar (Haven Wiley), four in Fletcher *Henderson* NC 14 Mar (Mike Resch), and 31 at Dobbins Farm *Anderson* SC 3 Apr (Steve Patterson).

Golden-winged Warbler x Blue-winged Warbler (Brewster's Warbler): Individuals were photographed and heard singing the typical Blue-winged Warbler song near Rainbow Springs *Macon* NC 25 Apr through 14 May (Chayse Davis, m. obs.) and near Long Branch Environmental Education Center *Buncombe* NC 16 May through 2 Jun (Clifton Avery, m. obs.). One seen in western *Avery* NC 14 May was heard singing both species' songs (Avery).

Golden-winged Warbler x Blue-winged Warbler (Lawrence's Warbler): One was photographed and heard singing the typical Golden-winged Warbler song at Rich Mountain Gap in northern *Watauga* NC 24 May (Garrett Rhyne) and 31 May (Paul Beerman).

Nashville Warbler: One photographed in a yard in Greensboro *Guilford* NC 5 Apr (Caroline Wolfe-Merritt) was rather early.

Connecticut Warbler: Three were reported this spring—one seen and heard singing in the Hospital Fields in Brevard *Transylvania* NC 11 May (Logan Parr), one seen and heard singing in Maudlin *Greenville* SC 11 May and 21-22 May (Kevin Kubach), and one photographed and heard singing at Rosman Community Park *Transylvania* NC 14 May (Nathaniel Axtell).

Mourning Warbler: One seen at Historic Bethabara Park *Forsyth* NC 11-12 May (John Haire, m. obs.) was the only one reported this spring.

American Redstart: One at Savannah NWR *Jasper* SC 21 Feb (James Lee) through 10 Mar (Sara Meissner) likely over-wintered in the area.

Kirtland's Warbler: A singing adult male was seen at Meat Camp Creek Environmental Studies Area *Watauga* NC 13 May (Katie Griffith, m. obs.) through the early morning of 14 May (Steve Howell).

Cape May Warbler: One seen and photographed at the Old Bynum Bridge *Chatham* NC 25-29 Mar (Mark Goodwin, m. obs.) was quite early.

Bay-breasted Warbler: Individuals at the former quarry in Dyers Hill *Marlboro* SC 24 Apr (Shawn Smolen-Morton, Mac Williams) and at Donnelley WMA *Colleton* SC 3 May (Marc Regnier) were unusual for sites in the coastal plain during spring.

Chestnut-sided Warbler: One seen and photographed along the Duck Park Boardwalk *Dare* NC 5-7 May (Jeff Lewis, m. obs.) was unusual for the Outer Banks in spring.

Western Tanager: One visited a yard in Southern Shores *Dare* NC 16 Mar through 20 Apr (Jim Gould).

Indigo Bunting: A first-spring male photographed in a yard in West Ashley *Charleston* SC 10 Mar (John Graham) was extremely early.

Painted Bunting: North and inland of the species' typical range was an adult male in a yard in Greenville *Pitt* NC 2 Apr (Emily Johnson), an adult male at a feeder near Lake Tillery *Stanly* NC 2 Apr (Kimberly Swift), an adult female at a feeder in western *Johnston* NC 4 May (Kathy Jones), and an adult female in a yard in Indian Trail *Union* NC 14 May (Martina Nordstrand).

Dickcissel: An adult male visiting a feeder just east of Lewisville *Forsyth* NC 25 Feb through 31 Mar (G. Baliga, m. obs.) was unusual for the Piedmont in late winter / early spring. Dickcissels began returning to traditional summering sites in late April, with six at Dobbins Farm *Anderson* SC by 2 May (George & Jean Askew), six along Brent Haigler Rd *Union* NC by 8 May (Martina Nordstrand), four along Snow Mill Drive *Spartanburg* SC by 16 May (Simon Harvey), three at Alligator River NWR *Dare* NC by 17 May (Ricky Davis), three along Howerton Rd *Guilford* NC by 22 May (Andrew Thornton), nine at North River Preserve *Carteret* NC by 24 May (John Fussell, Steve Howell), and three along Mount Olive Rd in *Spartanburg* SC near its border with *Cherokee* by 31 May (Irvin Pitts). Up to four singing males along West Horse Branch Trail in *Darlington* SC 15 May into June (Steve Patterson, Mac Williams, m. obs.) and one along Young Rd in *Florence* SC 20-21 May (Shawn Smolen-Morton) were unusual for that part of the state.

Addendum

The following report was omitted from the Winter 2019-2020 Briefs for the Files:

Northern Goshawk: An immature bird was seen at Alligator River NWR *Dare* NC during its CBC 30 Dec (Bob Lewis).

The following report is amended to read as follows:

Yellow Rail: Three were reported in Dare NC during the Bodie-Pea Islands CBC 28 Dec—two flushed at the north end of Pea Island NWR (Al Hooks, Guy McGrane) and another heard responding to playback in the Roanoke Island Marsh (Kyle Kittelberger).

The previously published report did not include Al Hooks as an observer of the Pea Island birds. The amended report specifies the location and observer for the bird responding to playback.

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The Carolina Bird Club is a non-profit organization which represents and supports the birding community in the Carolinas through its official website, publications, meetings, workshops, trips, and partnerships, whose mission is

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The Chat

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General Field Notes

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Cover: Roseate Tern, 27 July 2020, Dare Co, NC.
Photo by David Fischer

First Record of Roseate Spoonbills (*Platalea ajaja*) Nesting in South Carolina

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Historically, the breeding range of the Roseate Spoonbill (*Platalea ajaja*) in North America spanned coastal areas of Texas, Louisiana, and Florida (Dumas 2020), however the species was documented nesting as far north as Camden County, Georgia beginning in 2011 (Keyes et al. 2011). In South Carolina, the Roseate Spoonbill once was considered to be a very rare visitor, with a maximum count of four individuals prior to 1989 (Post and Gautreaux 1989), but has become increasingly common. In a summary of sightings during the summer of 2016, Southern (2016) reported high counts of between 12 and 37 Roseate Spoonbills in four coastal counties in South Carolina. During the spring and summer of 2018, an irruption of Roseate Spoonbills was observed in South Carolina and North Carolina beginning in May and continuing into August (Southern 2018a, 2018b, 2019). Although immature individuals account for the majority of sightings, immature and adult Roseate Spoonbills have been observed in established wading bird rookeries on a few occasions between 2011 and 2020 (Hand pers. obs., Sanders pers. comm.)

On 11 June 2020, Rachel Bonafilia, seasonal employee of the S.C. Department of Natural Resources, first observed an adult Roseate Spoonbill on a nest in incubation posture while completing a survey of wading birds. The nest was located in a mixed-species wading bird rookery on a privately-owned property in Charleston County, South Carolina. The rookery habitat consisted of a large pond containing wooded islands and shorelines dominated by red maple (*Acer rubrum*), wax myrtle (*Myrica cerifera*), loblolly pine (*Pinus taeda*), live oak (*Quercus virginiana*), and buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*). The Roseate Spoonbill nest was approximately five meters above the ground in a red maple tree.

The nest was observed from a distance on 19, 26, and 30 June and on 8, 15, and 23 July 2020 (Figure 1). Chicks were first seen on 19 June 2020 when an adult Roseate Spoonbill sitting in the nest interacted with a downy chick. Two chicks were observed in the nest during each subsequent visit until 23 July 2020, when both chicks were seen climbing and making short flights between branches in trees within five meters of the nest.

In addition to providing the first documentation of Roseate Spoonbills hatching and fledging young in South Carolina, our observations provide a new northern-most nesting record by the species along the Atlantic Coast. The northward expansion of the breeding and post-breeding dispersal ranges of the Roseate Spoonbill along the Atlantic Coast has been well-documented and is likely to continue if factors described by Keyes et al. (2011) including increasingly high productivity coupled with habitat degradation in Florida persist.

Figure 1. Roseate Spoonbill nest in Charleston County, South Carolina containing an adult with two chicks on 26 June 2020 (left) and two unattended chicks on 8 July 2020 (right).

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B. Everett Jordan Lake Bird Counts

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This is the first in a series of articles presenting the bird count data from the B. Everett Jordan Lake (a.k.a. Jordan Lake) Spring and Christmas Bird Counts. This article explains how the counts work and presents data on several species of birds whose populations are directly tied to the lake. Future articles will explore other groups of species.

Introduction

New Hope Audubon sponsors two bird counts each year in a 15-mile diameter count circle centered in the area of Jordan Lake in Chatham County, North Carolina (Fig. 1).

Figure 1. Jordan Lake Count Circle.

Figure 2 is the same count circle map, showing the count areas that are covered by individual teams of counters.

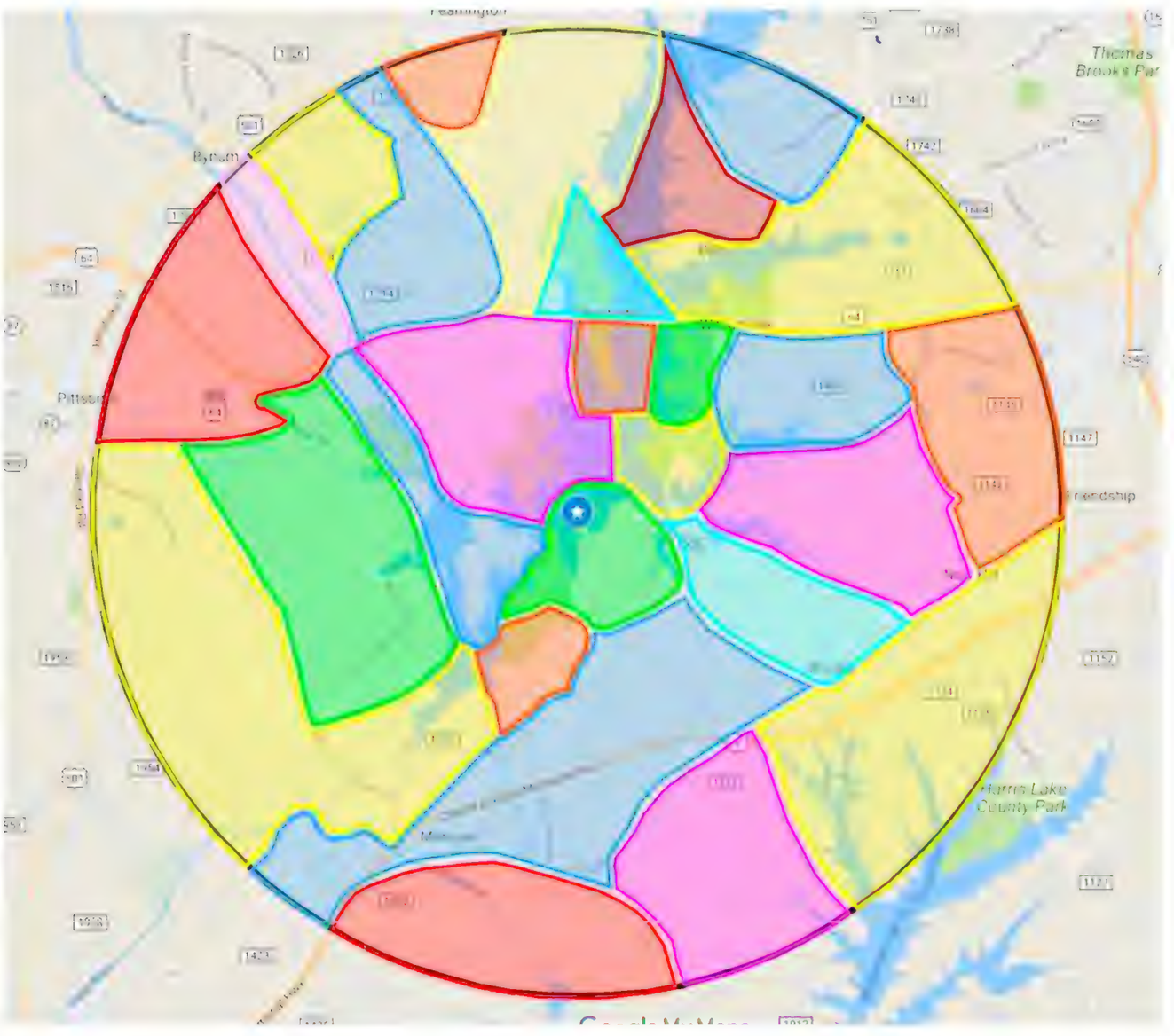


Figure 2. Jordan Lake Count Circle showing count areas.

The count is done on one designated day, often starting early in the morning, lasting six or more hours, and is restricted to the designated count circle. We try to count every individual bird of every species we encounter, seen or heard. The Spring Bird Count (SBC) date is usually the first Sunday in May. In winter, the count is either the last Sunday in December or the first Sunday in January. The winter count is part of a much larger effort called the Christmas Bird Count (CBC) organized by the National Audubon Society.

We have been doing the Jordan Lake counts every year since 1977. As a result, we have compiled a significant amount of data and can now see some trends in what has been happening to the bird populations in the area. These data are available in Excel spreadsheets that can be downloaded from the web addresses in Appendix I.

Counters are organized into small groups, each group covering one of the areas outlined in the map in Figure 2. Note that some areas cover parts of Jordan Lake directly (e.g., Ebenezer Point, Vista Point, and Crosswinds Marina), other areas cover tributaries to the lake (e.g., White Oak Creek, Haw River, and Beaver Creek), and other areas are not even part of the Jordan Lake basin at all, but includes portions of the Harris Lake, Moncure, and Deep River drainages. This is because the count circle was set up according to the 15-mile diameter guidelines established by National Audubon.

The counters report the name and number of individuals of every species they encounter on count day. But there are effort variations in the data from year to year as a result of the following:

- Weather (heavy cold rain versus clear, mild temperatures, for example)
- Lake levels (high lake levels limit access for observing birds)
- Number of individual counters
- Number of parties in the field

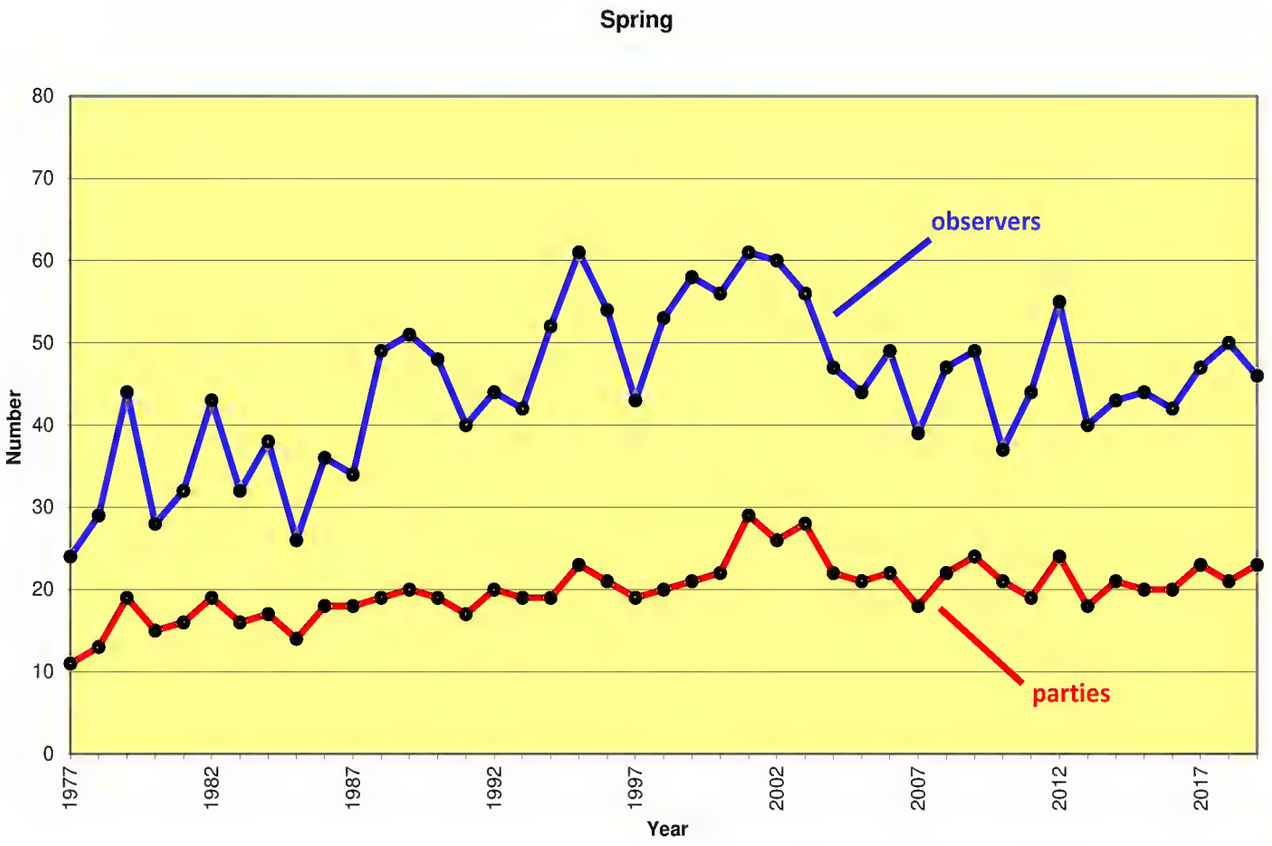


Figure 3. Spring Bird Count, observers and parties.

Figure 3 is a graph showing the number of counters and the number of parties for the SBC since 1977. Note that the number of counters has averaged around 45 since the 1990s, and the number of parties has averaged around 21 since about that same time. That consistency is a good thing for comparing data over the decades. For the analyses

discussed below and in future articles, sometimes I will use Christmas/CBC data (green graphs), and sometimes I will use Spring/SBC data (yellow graphs) for clarity or brevity.

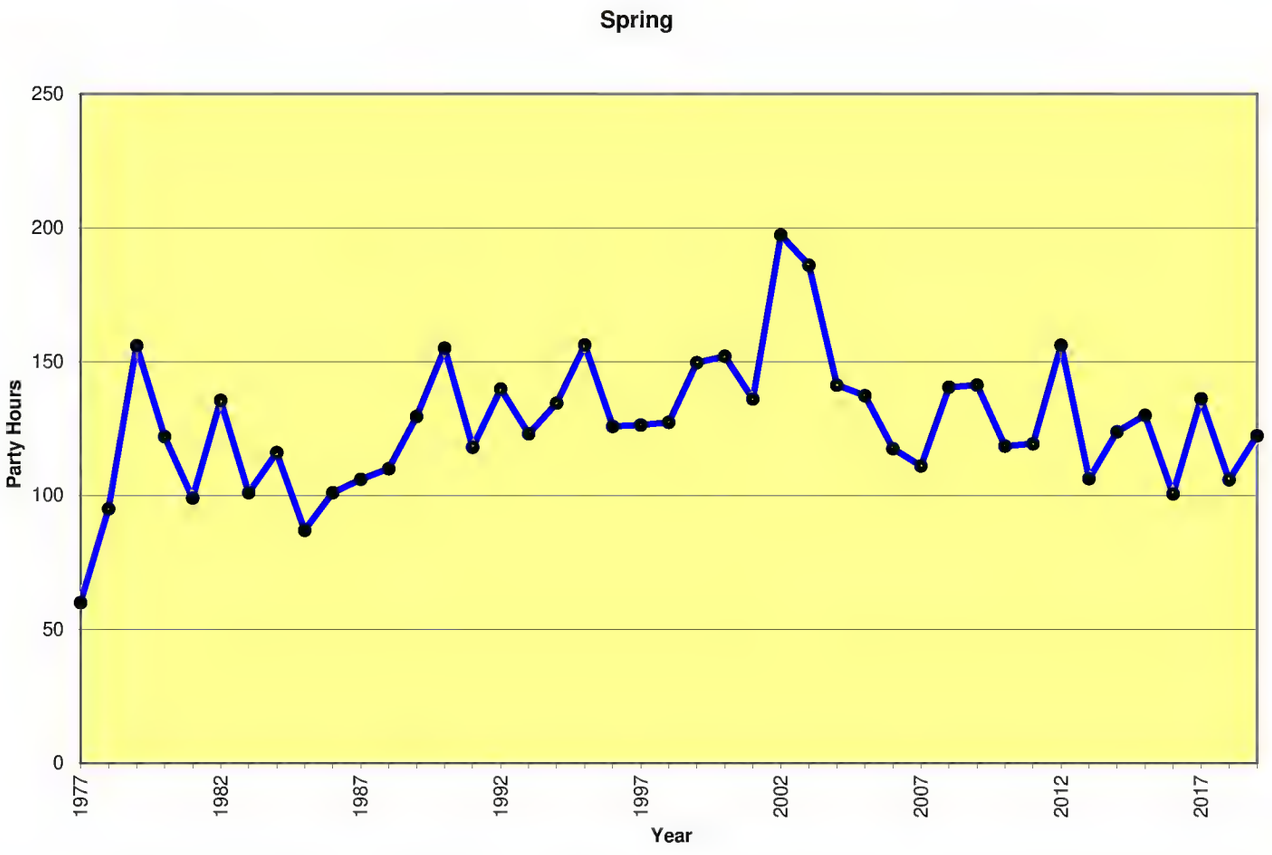


Figure 4. Spring Bird Count, party hours.

Figure 4 shows the time spent in the field each spring—the total party hours. This number varies more than the number of counters and number of parties, being more dependent on weather issues. The number of parties may be similar each year, but when the counters get cold and wet by 10:00 a.m., they tend to want to go home and get warm and dry. Our counters are all volunteers; they are not getting paid to endure harsh conditions. As a result, most of the graphs presented below use birds per party hour as a measure of effort (the number of individuals divided by the number of party hours). This makes it easier to compare data from year to year.

Note: The horizontal axis in all these graphs will be the timeline from 1977 to 2019—i.e., from the beginning of the counts to the present. The scale of the vertical axis will vary depending upon the number of birds reported—i.e., graphs of species with large populations will have a different vertical scale from graphs of species with smaller populations. However, when SBC data are compared to CBC data for a given species, those two graphs will usually have the same vertical scale to make comparisons easier to see at a glance.

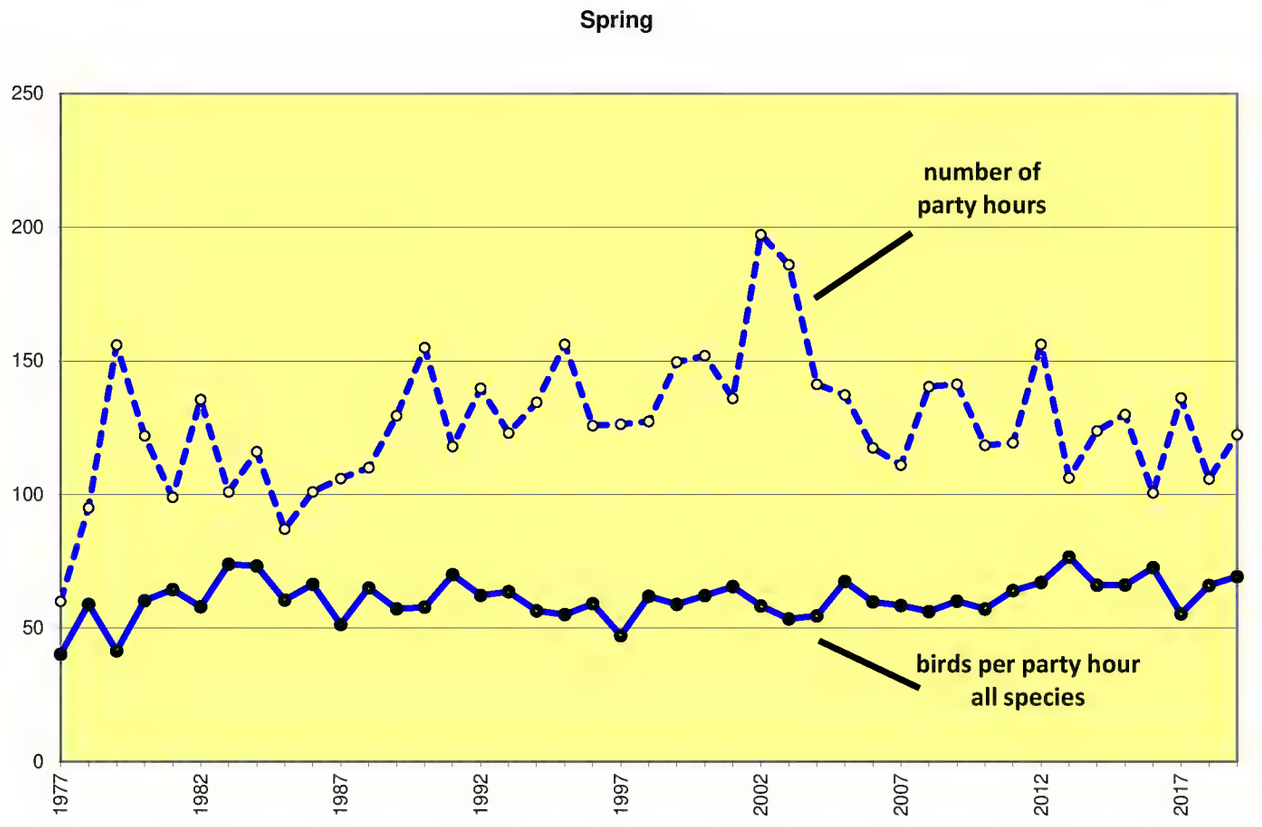


Figure 5. Spring Bird Count, party hours and birds per party hour, all species.

Figure 5 has two lines. The upper line shows the number of party hours (same as Fig. 4), while the lower line shows birds/party hour for the total number of individual birds of all species recorded for each year. The upper line shows the variation in effort over the years, while the lower line is 'damped down.' Rather than using the actual number of individual birds, we will use this effort-adjusted value for looking at trends over time in the graphs below. This will make those comparisons more meaningful.

Figure 6. Double-crested Cormorant. (photograph, Norm Budnitz)

Double-crested Cormorant

The graphs of SBC and CBC data for Double-crested Cormorants (Fig. 6) are good examples that show change through time. Figure 7 is a graph of the SBC data.

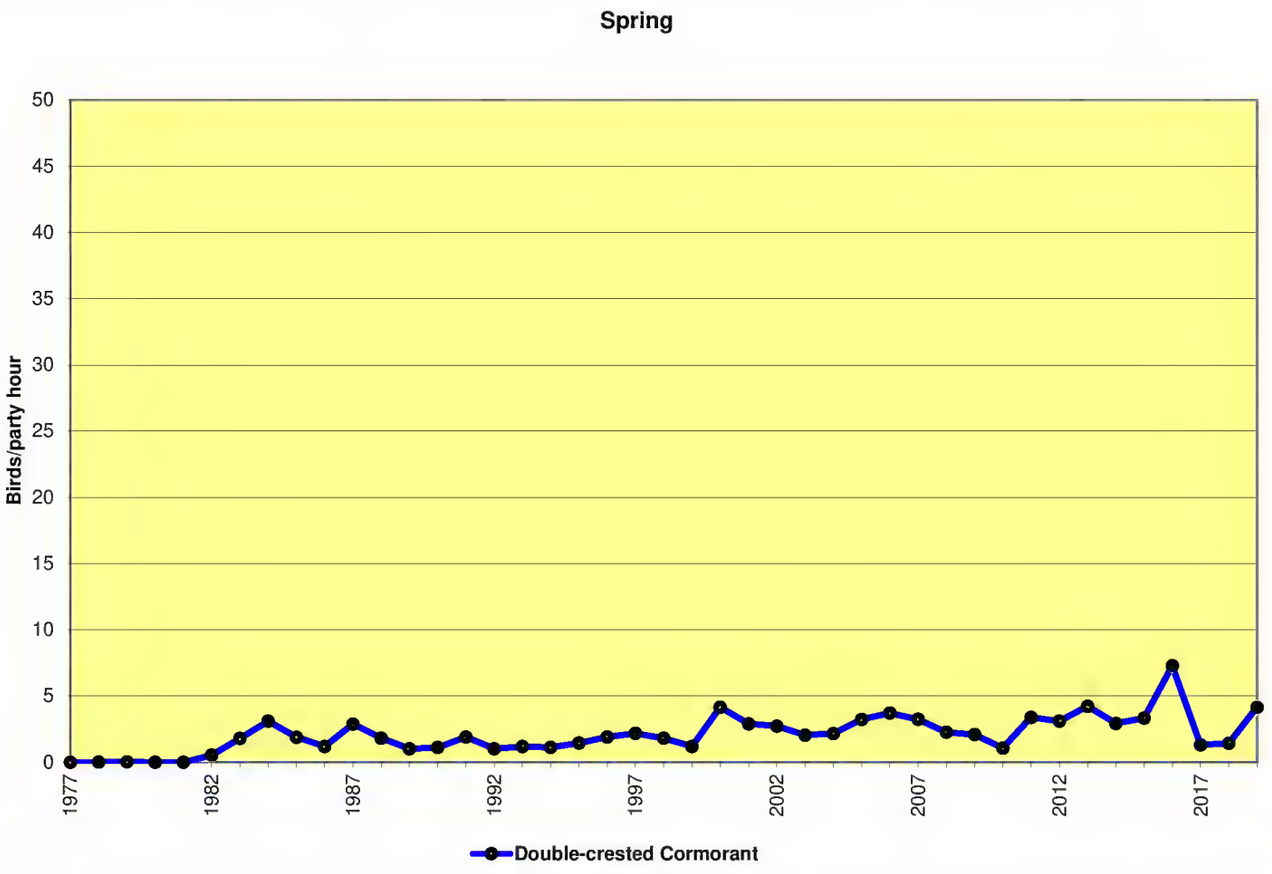


Figure 7. Spring Bird Count, Double-crested Cormorant.

Construction of the lake by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began in the early 1970s. The lake level was set at about 160 feet above sea level for the first few years and then raised to its current level of 216 feet above sea level in 1982. Because the lake is managed by the Corps and allowed to fluctuate for flood control of communities downstream, this level changes in periods of drought and periods of heavy rains. Note that the cormorants 'found' the lake at about the time it reached its stable level.

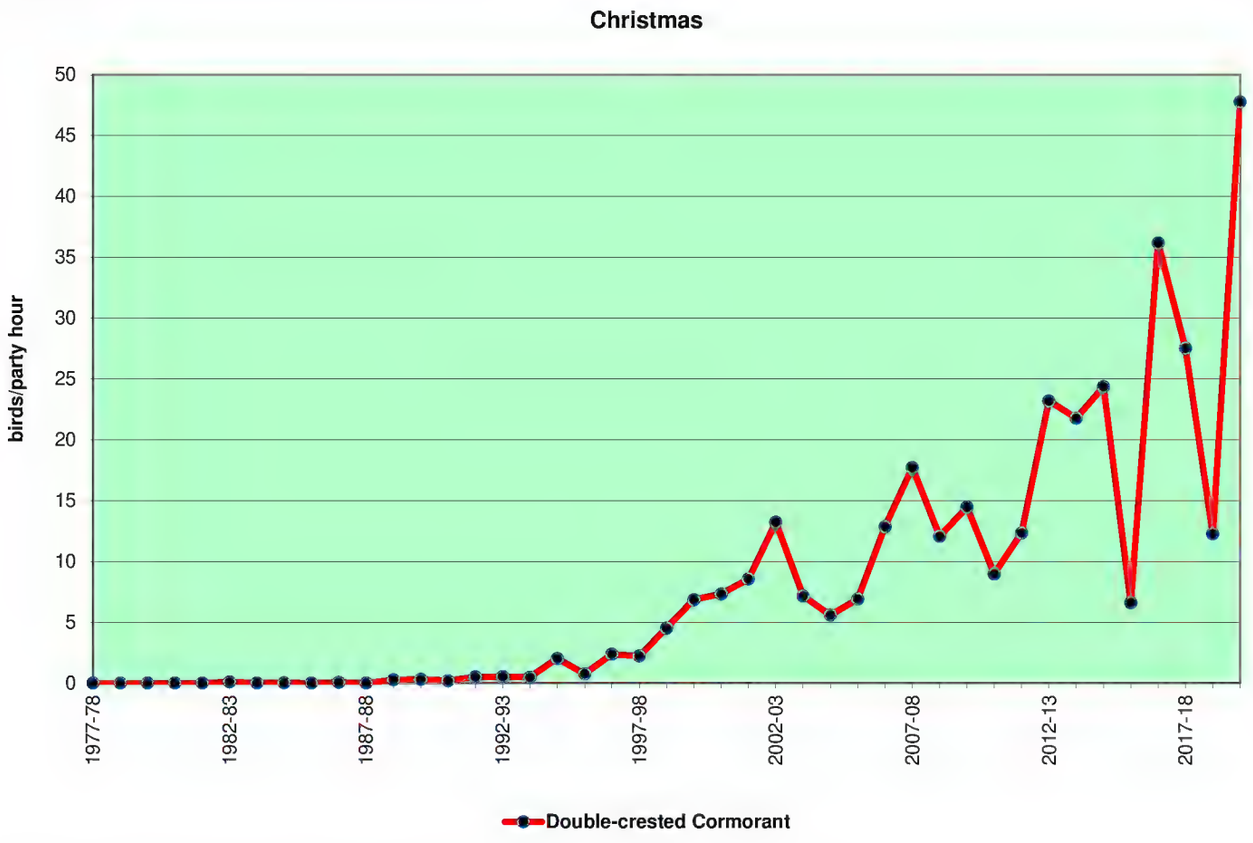
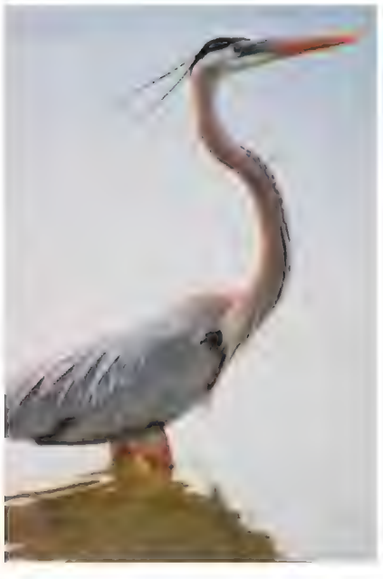


Figure 8. Christmas Bird Count, Double-crested Cormorant.

Figure 8 shows the CBC numbers for cormorants. Note that it took a while for the *wintering* cormorants to 'find' the lake and then to build up their winter population numbers. Most of these wintering birds move in from points further north. Perhaps this increase in population size is an indication of the 'maturation' of the lake over time. As the fish numbers have increased and stabilized, so have the number of cormorants, their predators.



Great Blue Heron

The two graphs, Figures 10 and 11, show the spring and Christmas count data for Great Blue Herons.

Figure 9. Great Blue Heron. (photograph, Norm Budnitz)

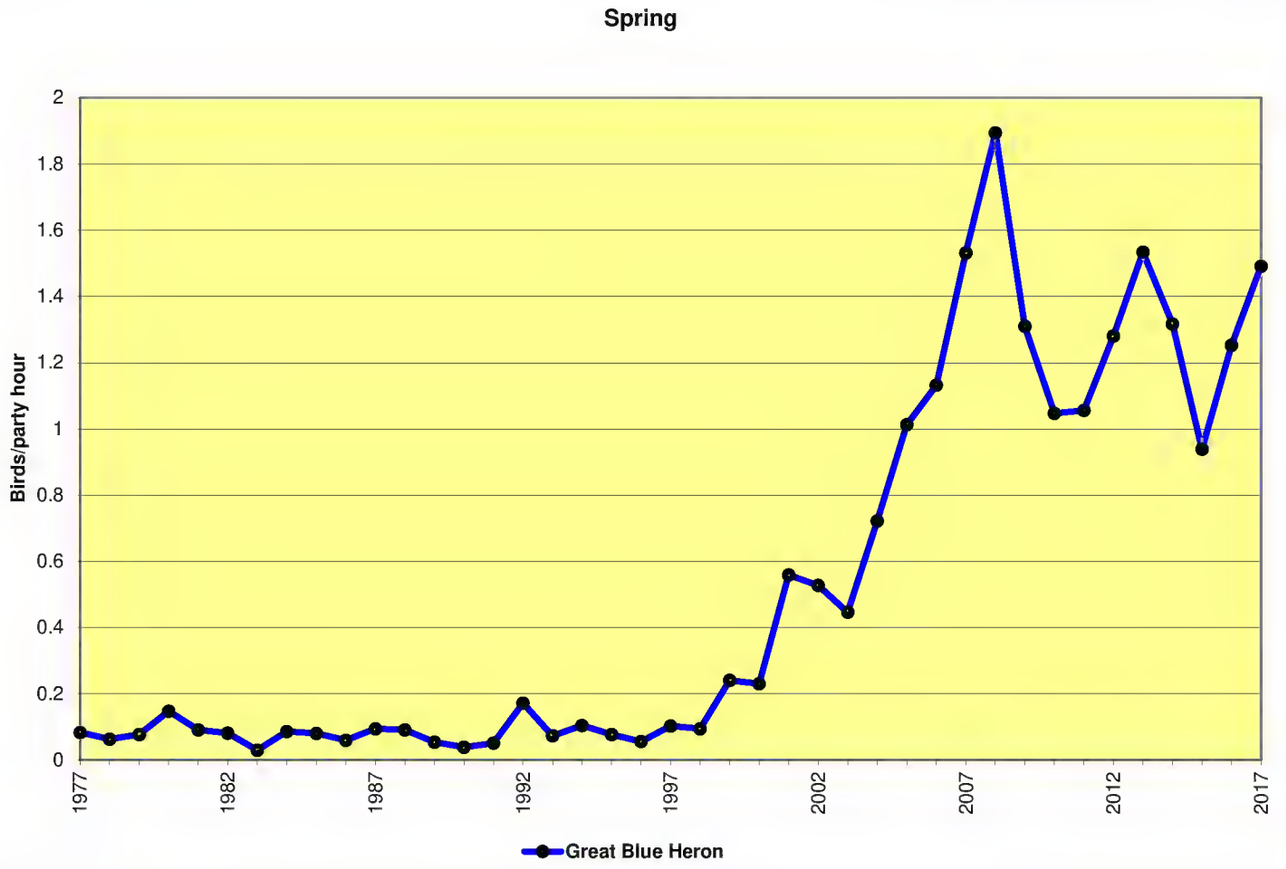


Figure 10. Spring Bird Count, Great Blue Heron.

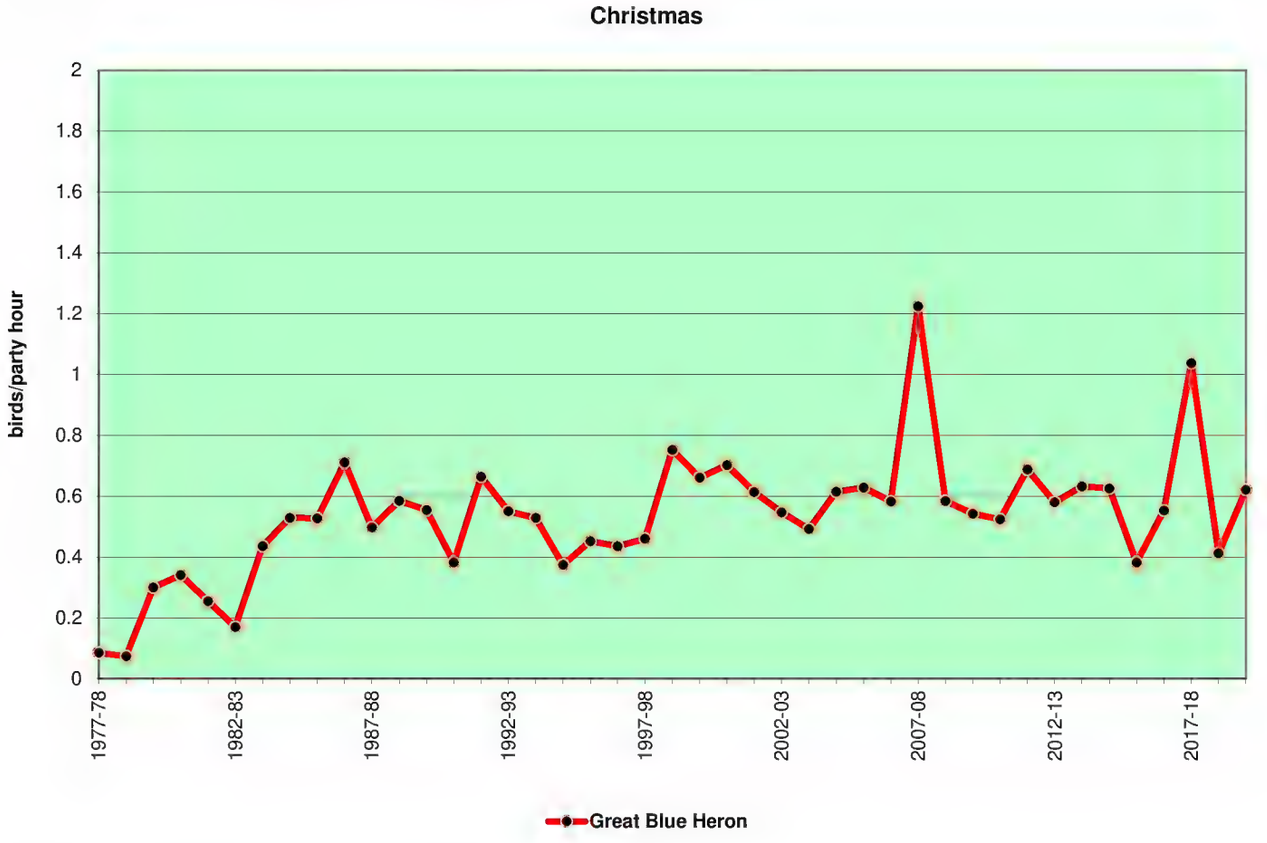


Figure 11. Christmas Bird Count, Great Blue Heron.

Great Blue Herons are year-round, permanent residents. Note that the spring numbers began to rise around the year 2000. This was probably about the time that nesting colonies began to form around the lake. The winter numbers were higher in the early years of the lake, probably due to birds moving in from surrounding areas as soon as the lake formed. Also note the larger number of herons in spring versus winter in recent years. There is a bulge in the numbers in spring with nestlings and fledglings. These young birds are particularly vulnerable to accidents and predation, so there is significant mortality of these young birds by the time we count again in the winter.

Figure 12. Bald Eagle. (photograph, Norm Budnitz)

Bald Eagle

For Bald Eagles, Figures 13 and 14 use number of individuals rather than birds/party hour on the vertical axis. This makes it easier to compare results with New Hope Audubon's quarterly eagle counts described below.

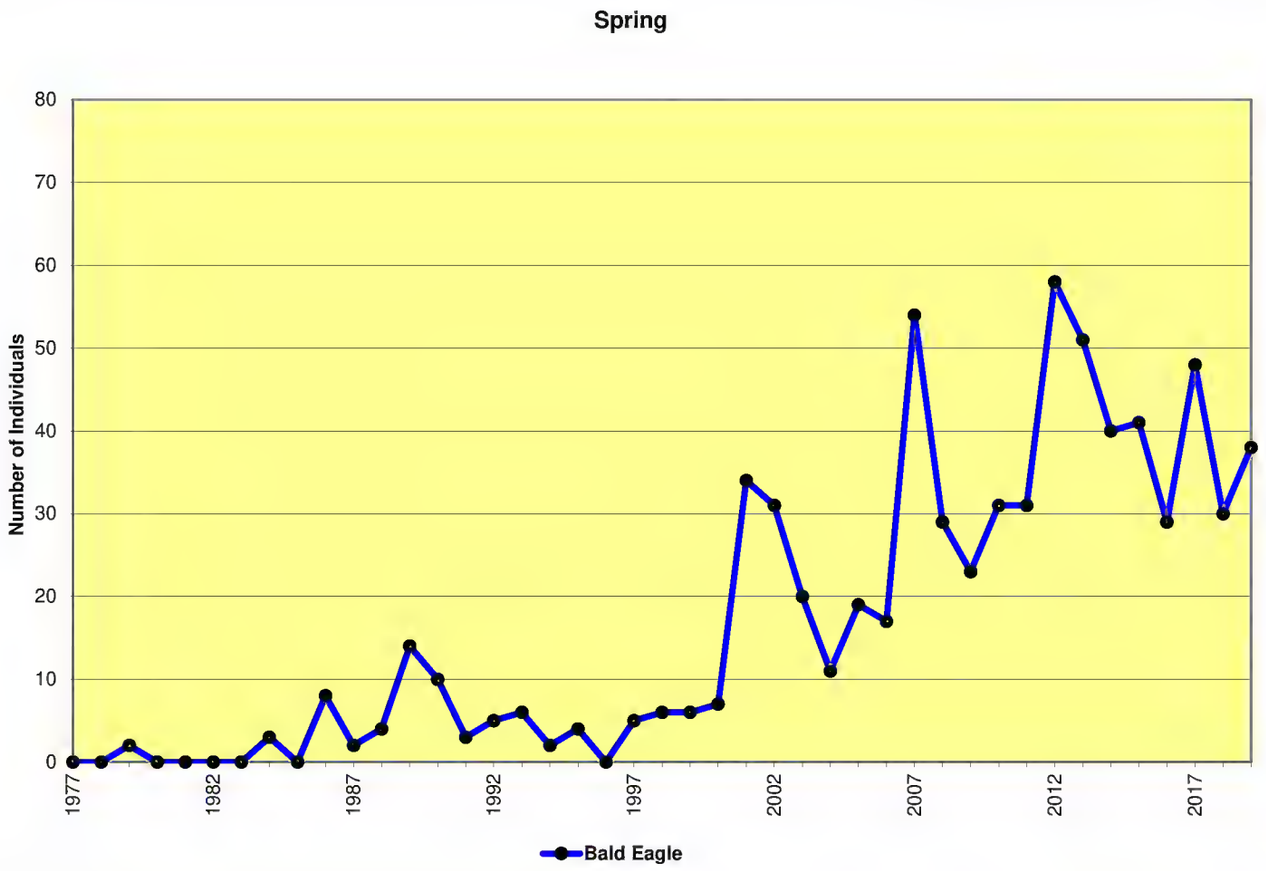


Figure 13. Spring Bird Count, Bald Eagle.

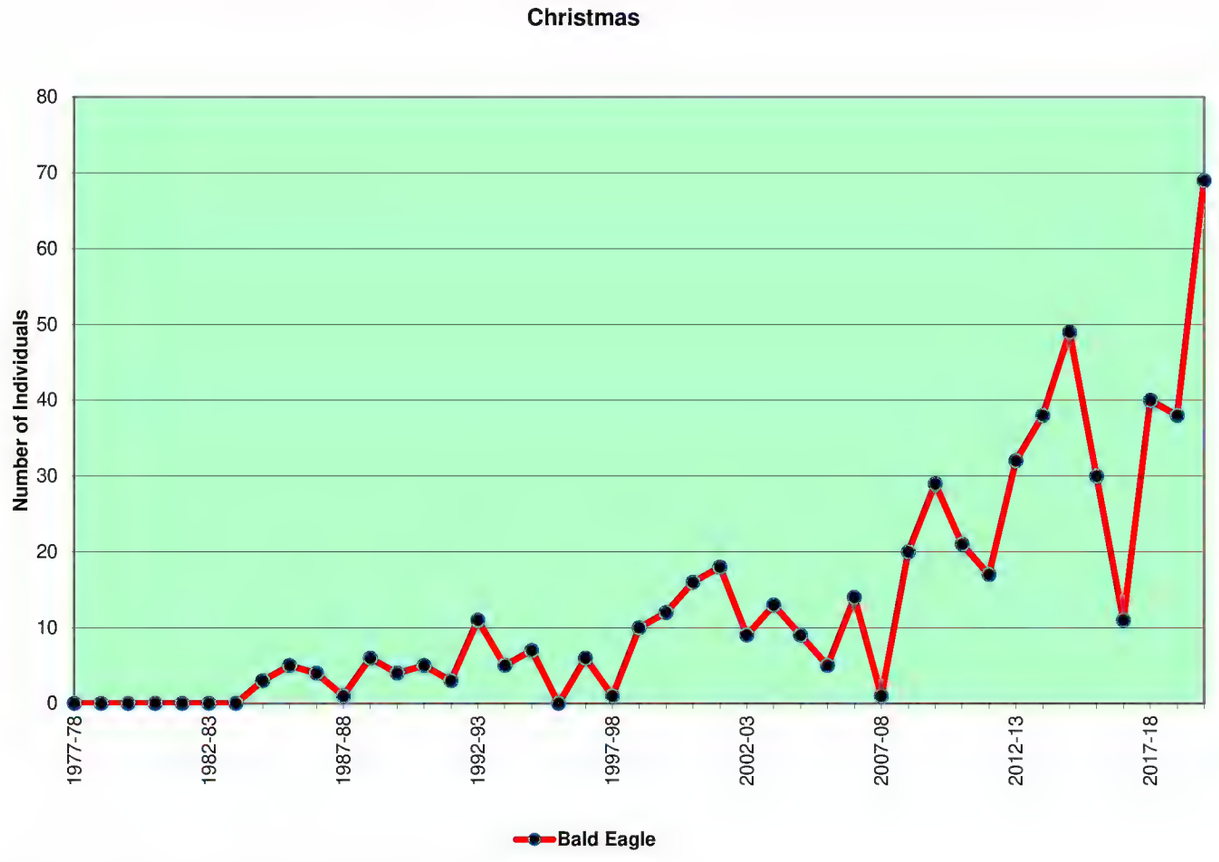


Figure 14. Christmas Bird Count, Bald Eagle.

As was the case with the cormorants, the eagles seem to have 'found' the lake when it reached its stable level in the early 1980s. These pioneer birds probably came from breeding populations in Florida and Chesapeake Bay during their annual post-breeding dispersal when young birds move away from the territories held by their parents. There are now several breeding pairs with nest sites scattered around the lake (also at Falls Lake, north of Raleigh). As the graphs show, the numbers of eagles have risen dramatically in recent years. Bald Eagles are fish eaters and are attracted to large lakes, particularly lakes with large shallow areas as is the case at Jordan Lake.

In addition to the spring and Christmas counts, New Hope Audubon has been conducting quarterly Bald Eagle counts using a different protocol (currently organized by Steve McMurray, a Park Ranger with the Jordan Lake State Recreation Area). The latter are point counts. Separate parties go to specific sites on a specific day and count all eagles they see from 07:00 to 08:30, rain or shine. Since all parties are counting at the same time, these counts are essentially snapshots of the lake, likely eliminating most duplicate counting. It is encouraging to compare the data from these two types of counts, as shown in the next two figures.

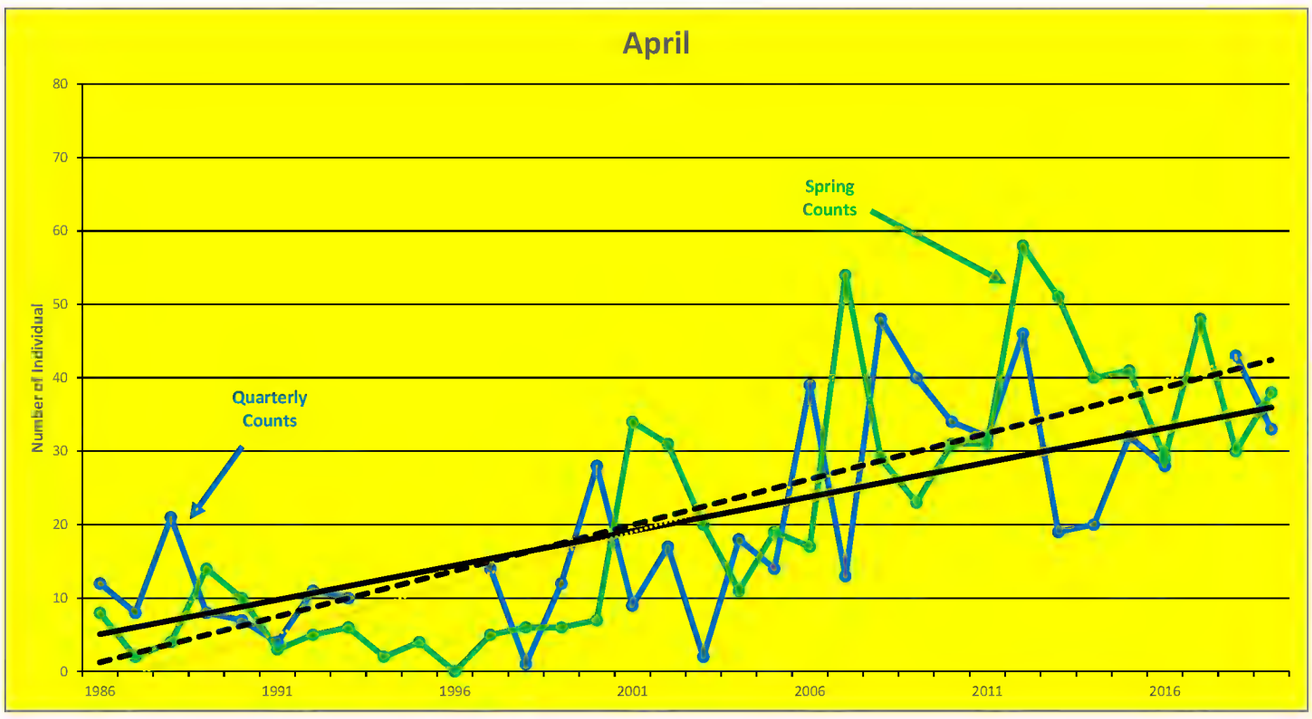


Figure 15. Spring Bird Count and April Quarterlies, Bald Eagle.

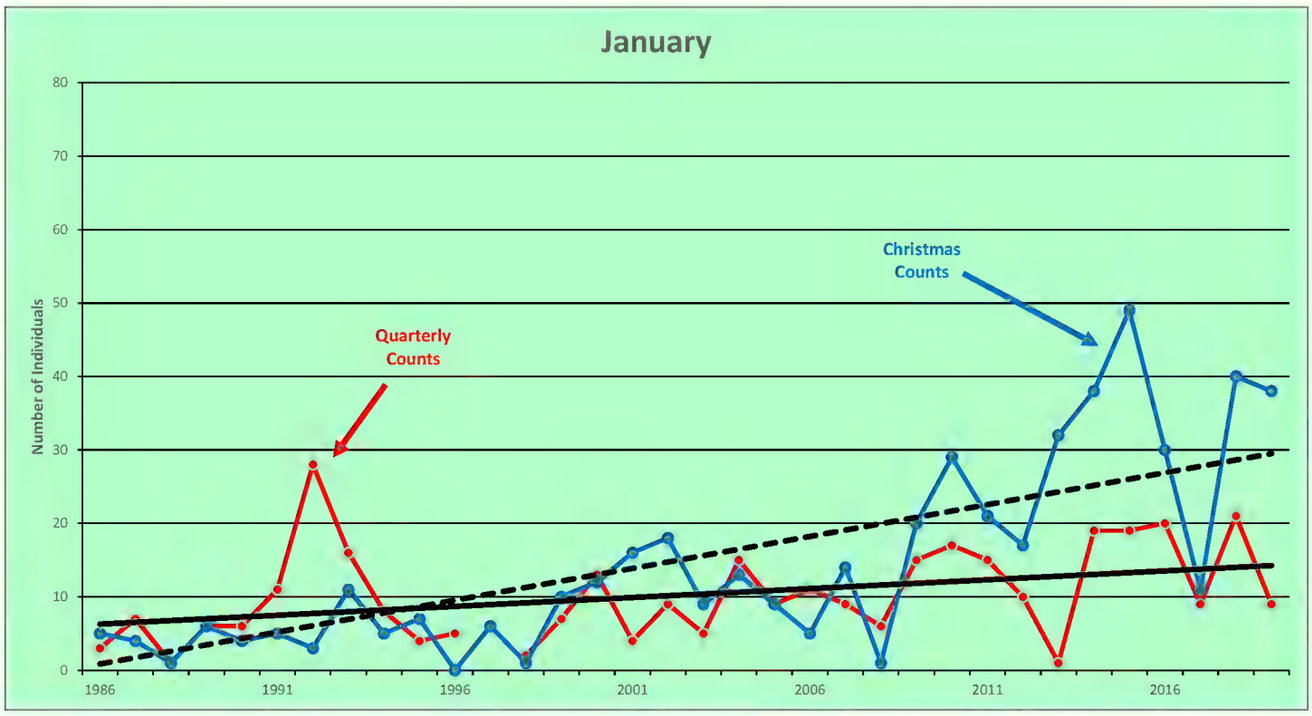


Figure 16. Christmas Bird Count and January Quarterlies, Bald Eagle.

These graphs compare the spring counts with the April quarterly counts (Fig. 15) and the Christmas counts with the January quarterlies (Fig. 16). Trend lines are included in these graphs to aid in the comparison. They are remarkably similar, indicating that both counting methods are revealing the same trends.

Figure 17. Ospreys (photograph, Bill Majoros)

Osprey

Ospreys are migratory birds. They breed on Jordan Lake, but they all but disappear in the winter, migrating south (only a half-dozen winter records). Figure 18 shows that these piscivorous (fish-eating) birds seem to be thriving on the lake.

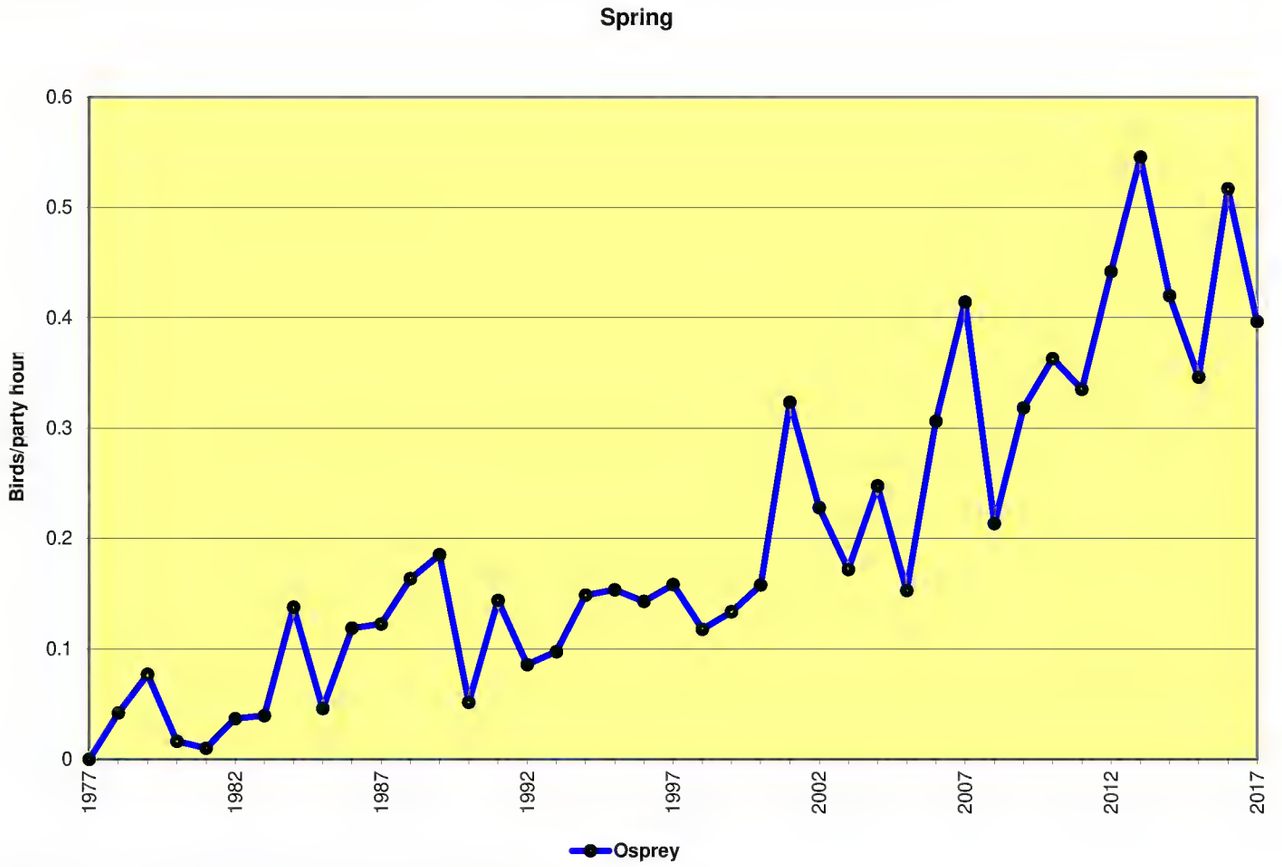


Figure 18. Spring Bird Count, Osprey.

Bald Eagle and Osprey populations suffered in the mid-1900s, especially after 1947, when DDT became widespread as a pesticide. Bald Eagles, for example, showed serious declines in breeding in Florida and in the Chesapeake Bay area (Buehler 2020): "Along 160 km of west coast of Florida, for example, 73 active nests with 103 young in 1947, but only 43 active nests with 8 young in 1957. Active nests on Chesapeake Bay declined from an estimated 600 pairs in 1936 to only 70 active nests in 1965."

Similar declines occurred with Ospreys (Bierregaard et. al. 2020): "DDT in lakes was taken in by tiny plants and animals (plankton). These organisms were then eaten by small fish that were in turn eaten by larger fish, thus accumulating DDT in their tissues. When Bald Eagles and Ospreys ate these fish, they received large doses of DDT. The result was that their eggs became fragile and would break in the nest. Their populations declined precipitously. After DDT was banned in the United States, these birds (and many others) made remarkable comebacks."

All this was brought to light in Rachel Carson's ground-breaking book, *Silent Spring* (Carson 1962). Carson and her book were influential in the modern environmental movement and the creation of the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Ecosystems are probably more stable with the return of these top predators, and now we get the great pleasure of seeing Bald Eagles and Ospreys at Jordan Lake.

American Wigeon (photograph, Norm Budnitz)

Wood Duck (photograph, Bill Majoros)

Ducks

Many ducks of a variety of species spend the winter on Jordan Lake. Most of these species breed further north in North America and move south as the lakes freeze. Species that have occurred on the lake at least once include Wood Duck, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Mallard, American Black Duck, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Greater and Lesser Scaup, Surf and White-winged Scoter, Long-tailed Duck, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Hooded, Common and Red-breasted Merganser, and Ruddy Duck. Figure 19 is a graph of all the duck species lumped together. In general, we averaged 2-6 birds/party hour most years. However, in the 1989-90 CBC approximately 500 Mallards appeared on the lake, and in the 1993-94 CBC approximately 1500 Ring-necked Ducks and 200 Hooded Mergansers showed up. We have no explanation for these unusual numbers.

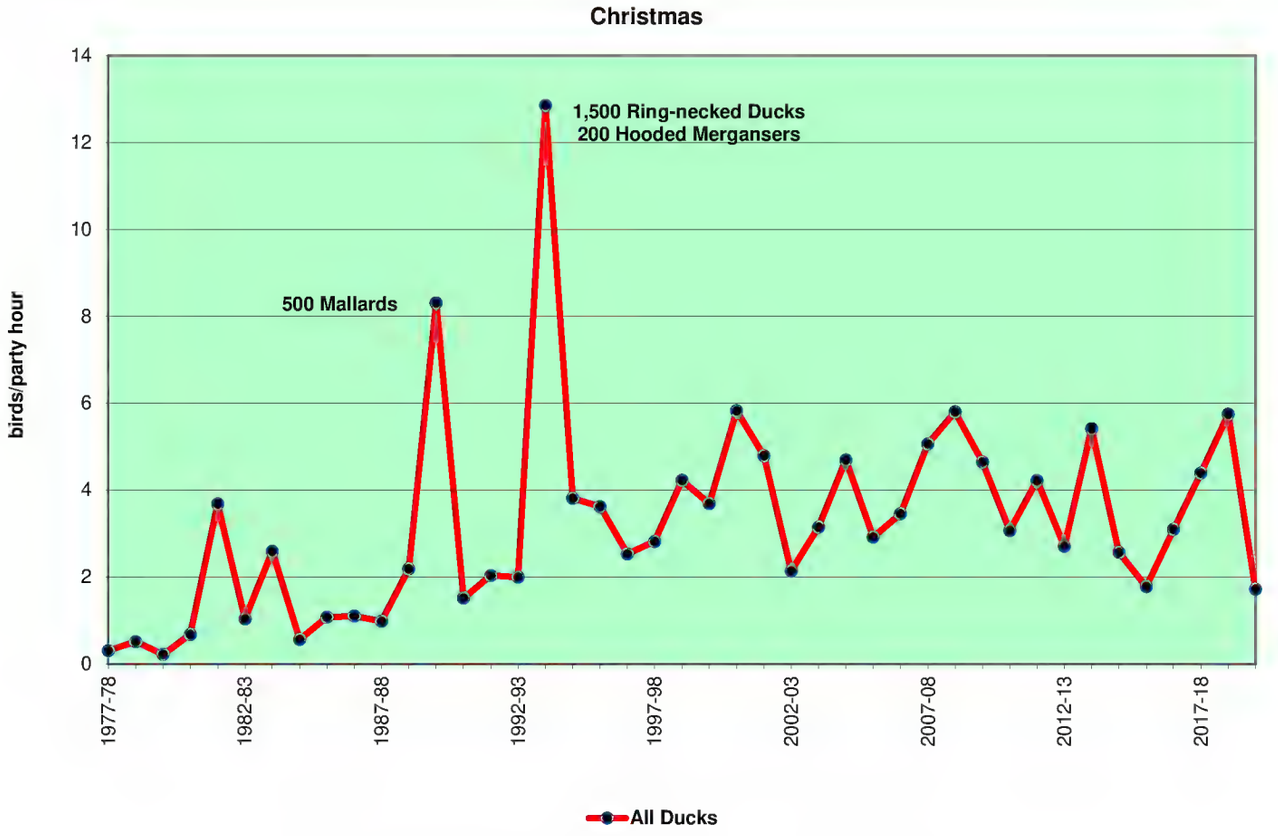


Figure 19. Christmas Bird Count, All ducks.

Other Species

In addition to the species mentioned above, the following water birds show up on the CBC in winter or sometimes on the SBC in spring. Some are annual visitors while others are rare, only occurring occasionally, as noted: Snow Goose (twice), Canada Goose (annual), Tundra Swan (once), Pied-billed Grebe (annual), Horned Grebe (annual), Red-necked Grebe (twice), Eared Grebe (four times), American Coot (almost annual), Bonaparte's Gull (annual), Ring-billed Gull (annual), Herring Gull (annual), Glaucous Gull (twice), Iceland Gull (once), Lesser Black-backed Gull (nine times since 2002), Great Black-backed Gull (nine times since 2002), Forster's Tern (12 times, spring and Christmas), Caspian Tern (15 times in spring), Common Tern (once in spring), Red-throated Loon (three times), and Common Loon (annual).

Ring-billed Gulls (photograph, Norm Budnitz)

The gull story is fascinating and has been discussed in blog articles on the New Hope Audubon Society website, so I won't repeat it here, except to say that since the opening of the South Wake County Landfill in 2008, the numbers of gulls have exploded, reaching as high as 65,000 in 2011. The numbers have since decreased, but we still count tens of thousands each winter. Web addresses for Gull Poop (2017), Jordan Lake Gulls Revisited (2019), and Jordan Lake Gulls Revisited—Revisited (2020), are included in Appendix I.

Future articles in this series will look at land birds, paying particular attention to species whose numbers have increased and, more ominously, those whose numbers have decreased.

Appendix I

Full web addresses referenced in the text:

Cumulative Spring Bird Count Data: https://www.newhopeaudubon.org/wp-content/themes/nhas/library/docs/cumulative,jls,web.xlsx

Cumulative CBC data: https://www.newhopeaudubon.org/wp-content/themes/nhas/library/docs/cumulative,jlx,web.xlsx

Gull Poop (2017): https://www.newhopeaudubon.org/blog/gull-poop/

Jordan Lake Gulls Revisited (2019): https://www.newhopeaudubon.org/blog/jordan-lake-gulls-revisited/

Jordan Lake Gulls Revisited—Revisited (2020): https://www.newhopeaudubon.org/blog/jordan-lake-gulls-revisited-revisited/

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Bierregaard, R. O., A. F. Poole, M. S. Martell, P. Pyle, and M. A. Patten (2020). Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*), version 1.0. In Birds of the World (P. G. Rodewald, Editor). Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY, USA. https://doi.org/10.2173/bow.osprey.01

Buehler, D. A. (2020). Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), version 1.0. In Birds of the World (A. F. Poole and F. B. Gill, Editors). Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY, USA. https://doi.org/10.2173/bow.baleag.01

Carson, Rachel (1962). *Silent Spring*. Houghton Mifflin Company.

Immature White Ibis, 20 July 2020, Durham Co, NC. Photo by Kent Fiala.

BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

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Holly Springs, NC 27540
joshsouthern79@gmail.com

(All dates Summer 2020, unless otherwise noted)

Briefs for the Files is a seasonal collection of uncommon-to-rare or unusual North and South Carolina bird sightings and events which do not necessarily require a more detailed Field Note or article. Reports of your sightings are due the 20th of the month after the end of the previous season.

Winter	*December 1–February 28*	*due March 20*
Spring	*March 1–May 31*	*due June 20*
Summer	*June 1–July 31*	*due August 20*
Fall	*August 1–November 30*	*due December 20*

Reports may be submitted in any format, but I prefer that you use email, list multiple sightings in taxonomic order (rather than by date or location), and type your report directly into the body of the email. If your sightings are in a file, please copy-and-paste the text into the body of the email, rather than sending an attachment.

Suitable reports for the Briefs include any sightings you feel are unusual, rare, noteworthy, or just plain interesting to you in any way! It is my responsibility to decide which reports merit inclusion in the Briefs.

Please be sure to include details of any rare or hard-to-identify birds.

I rely in part on sightings reported in Carolinabirds. Please don't, however, rely on me to pick up your sightings from Carolinabirds. Instead, please also send your sightings directly to me as described above.

If I feel that your sighting warrants a Field Note, I will contact either you or the appropriate state Field Notes editor. You may, of course, submit your Field Note directly to the editor without going through me.

Abbreviations: **BRC** – Bird Records Committee, **et al.** – and others, **m. obs.** – multiple observers, **NC** – North Carolina, **NWR** – National Wildlife Refuge, **Rd** – Road, **SC** – South Carolina, **SP** – State Park, **WMA** – Wildlife Management Area

All italicized place names are counties.

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck: 20 just southwest of Engelhard *Hyde* NC 8-9 Jun (Kelly Davis, m. obs.) was a notable count for NC. It is possible the species nested in that area, as two adults were seen in and around a Wood Duck nesting box 23 Jun (Randy Hignite, fide Davis). Six at the former gravel quarry in Dyers Hill *Marlboro* SC 1 Jun (Mac Williams), four along the Saluda River just below the dam on Lake Greenwood *Greenwood* SC 9 Jun (Matthew Campbell), and ten in Madison *Rockingham* NC 19 Jun (Brian & Martha McDermott) were firsts for those counties.

Brant: Two on the Pamlico Sound near Hatteras *Dare* NC and one on the Pamlico Sound near Ocracoke *Hyde* NC 8 Jun (John Lynch) were unusual for summer.

Tundra Swan: Three in the Lake Landing area of Mattamuskeet NWR *Hyde* NC 28 Jun through 6 Jul (Ricky Davis, m. obs.) were unusual, as most summer sightings are of individuals, often injured and unable to migrate.

Redhead: Two, a drake, likely injured, and a hen, at the pond adjacent to the Cedar Island Ferry Terminal *Carteret* NC 17-30 Jun (Marty Wall, m. obs.), with the hen continuing through 16 Jul (Ronnie Hewlette), were unusual for summer.

Ring-necked Duck: For the fourth year in a row a seemingly healthy drake lingered on a pond along US-1 in southern *Lee* NC into summer. This year, two drakes were seen 7-12 Jun with one remaining into August (Jeff Beane, Stephanie Horton). Individual drakes were seen on Lake James *McDowell* NC 2 Jun (Art Webster), in northern *Greenville* SC 19 Jun (Mike Resch), at Santee NWR *Clarendon* SC 21 Jun (Mandy & Mark Johnson), and on Osceola Lake *Henderson* NC throughout the period (Kevin Burke).

Lesser Scaup: Four lingered on the Pamlico River in *Beaufort* NC this summer. After one was seen from Havens Garden Park in Washington 11 Jun (Adam & Gina Kent), two were seen there 17 Jun (Betsy Kane), and four were reported 3 Jul (Alexander Teodorescu). One seen downriver at the phosphate mine in Aurora 4-7 Jul (Casey Boswell) was likely one of those same individuals.

Bufflehead: Individual hens at Mackay Island NWR *Currituck* NC 3 Jun and 19 Jun (Emily Johnson) and on Lake James *Burke* NC 26 Jun (Art Webster) were unusual for summer.

Hooded Merganser: An injured drake at North River Preserve *Carteret* NC 21 Jun through 19 Jul (John Fussell, et al.), and a hen in its company 5 Jul (Fussell, et al.), were unusual for that area in summer.

Common Merganser: Breeding was confirmed along the Tuckasegee River in *Jackson* NC when a hen was seen with three juveniles 19 Jun (Melanie Vickers) and 3 Jul (Jeremey Hyman). Breeding also likely occurred along the Johns River in *Caldwell* NC where seven female/juvenile-types were photographed together 24 Jun (Caroline Martin).

Pied-billed Grebe: Breeding was confirmed at Silver Bluff Audubon Sanctuary *Aiken* SC when two juveniles were seen with adults 3 Jun (Matt Malin) and at North River Preserve *Carteret* NC when two juveniles were seen with adults 14 Jun and 21 Jun (John Fussell, et al.).

Horned Grebe: One seen and photographed on Lake Keowee *Oconee* SC 25 Jun through 14 Jul (Don Lenahan) was very unusual for summer.

White-winged Dove: Individuals were seen visiting a feeder in North Myrtle Beach *Horry* SC 17-18 Jun (Deb Winter) and near the entrance to the Cape Point Campground *Dare* NC 25 Jul (Marcia Lyons).

Black-billed Cuckoo: Two in the Dan River Game Land *Rockingham* NC 11 Jul (Marty Wall) were unusual for a site outside of the mountains in mid-summer. Were these birds attempting to nest there or had they simply wandered from their breeding grounds?

Common Gallinule: Breeding was confirmed again this year at the former quarry in Dyers Hill *Marlboro* SC, somewhat inland of the species' typical breeding range, when a total of 16 including adults and juveniles were seen there 1 Jun (Mac Williams). Breeding was first confirmed at the site in 2016.

Limpkin: Breeding in the Carolinas was confirmed for the first time when the two adults continuing at the northern end of Goose Creek Reservoir *Berkeley* SC since August 2019 were photographed alongside four juveniles 6 Jun (Pam Ford, Craig Watson). Other sightings, all from the SC coastal plain, included one along the Black River just northeast of Andrews *Georgetown* 10 Jun through 3 Jul (Robert Roll), one in the Sun City Hilton Head community *Beaufort* 21-25 Jun (m. obs.), one at Blacks Fish Camp *Berkeley* 22 Jun (Carl Bussells, Judson Riser), one in a subdivision northwest of West Ashley *Charleston* 27 Jun through 30 Jul (Marie Franklin, m. obs.), and two photographed together at a golf course in Bluffton *Beaufort* 21 Jul (Jim Massey).

Sandhill Crane: A seemingly healthy adult seen and photographed at a farm in western *Wayne* NC 8-14 Jun (Eric Dean, m. obs.) was unusual for summer. Sightings of an individual at sites along the NC coast from Bald Head Island *Brunswick* north to Corolla *Currituck* 26 Jun through 11 Jul (m. obs.) may represent the same wandering individual.

Black-necked Stilt: Notable counts were made around two expansive areas of marsh wrack along NC-12 at Cedar Island NWR *Carteret* NC —35 adults and one chick on 7 June (John Fussell, Steve Howell) and 38 adults on 14 Jun (Fussell, Howell, Marty Wall). Fussell notes that numbers declined there through the summer and none remained by late July. SC's high count was 149 including 20 juveniles at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access) *Jasper* 3 Jul (Steve Calver).

American Golden-Plover: One photographed on the barrier strand near the Cedar Island Ferry Terminal *Carteret* NC 26 Jul (John Fussell, Steve Howell) was somewhat early.

Pacific Golden-Plover: Pending review by the NC BRC is the report of an apparent Pacific Golden-Plover at Cape Point *Dare* NC 6 Jul into August (Megan Baker, m. obs.). If accepted, the report would become the second record of this species in the Carolinas, the first made at this same site last summer.

Long-billed Curlew: Individuals were seen on East Shackleford Banks *Carteret* NC 20 Jun through 9 Aug (Steve Howell, m. obs.) and at Ophelia Inlet on the Core Banks *Carteret* NC 25 Jun (Jon Altman, *fide* John Fussell).

Sanderling: One photographed at Lamaster Dairy Center (restricted access) *Pickens* SC 21 Jul (Kevin Kubach) was unusual for an inland site in summer.

Pectoral Sandpiper: One at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access) *Jasper* SC 3 Jul (Steve Calver) was early.

Short-billed Dowitcher: One photographed at Dobbins Farm *Anderson* SC 7 Jul (Debra & Steve Patterson) was somewhat early for an inland site.

Wilson's Snipe: One photographed in the Lake Landing area of Mattamuskeet NWR *Hyde* NC 28 Jun (Ricky Davis) was very early. Snipes don't typically begin to arrive in the Carolinas until late August.

Greater Yellowlegs: One seen and photographed at Brookshire Park *Watauga* NC 17 Jun (Richard Gray, Guy McGrane) was very unusual for the mountain region in June.

Wilson's Phalarope: Sightings involved five at Bear Island WMA *Colleton* SC 13 Jun (Matt Johnson, et al.), one at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 21-22 Jun (Alexander Teodorescu, m. obs.), one in the Lake Landing area of Mattamuskeet NWR *Hyde* NC 28 Jun (Ricky Davis), and five at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access) *Jasper* SC 3 Jul (Steve Calver).

Pomarine Jaeger: A seemingly healthy adult photographed on the beach in Carova Beach *Currituck* NC 1 Jun (Marissa Bijarro) was notable for a species rarely seen from shore.

Glaucous Gull: An immature bird lingered along the northern Outer Banks *Dare* NC until 18 Jun—seen on the beach in Kill Devil Hills 3-5 Jun (Mike & Peggy Eubank, m. obs.), in Southern Shores 14 Jun (Sage Church), and in Duck 18 Jun (Presley Riggs). There are only two previous records of this species in the Carolinas during the summer.

Roseate Tern: Sightings continued from spring at Cape Point *Dare* NC where an amazing count of 16 was made there 15 Jun (Megan Baker). Up to three were seen around Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC throughout the period (m. obs.). One on Ocracoke Island *Hyde* NC 8 Jul and 11 Jul (Daniel & Jonathan Irons) was unusual for that island. Two were photographed on the beach in Carova Beach *Currituck* NC 13 Jul (Max Nootbaar). Pending review by the SC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent

Roseate Tern at Huntington Beach SP *Georgetown* SC 18 Jul (Michael Robertson).

Arctic Tern: Pending review by the NC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent Arctic Tern at Lake Norman *Mecklenburg* NC 20 Jun (Greg Hays, Jeff Lemons). If accepted, the report would provide the seventh inland record for NC.

Black Skimmer: A first-summer individual photographed on Lake Hickory *Catawba* NC 13 Jun (Dwayne Martin, et al.) was very unusual for an inland site, especially away from the passage of a tropical storm. The bird was reportedly first seen there three days prior.

White-tailed Tropicbird: Possibly the most surprising find this summer was that of a juvenile White-tailed Tropicbird in Mebane *Alamance* NC 15 Jul (*fide* Matt Wangerin). The bird was collected by a wildlife rehabilitator and later transported to SkyWatch Bird Rescue in Castle Hayne *New Hanover* NC 16 Jul. This report provided the sixth inland record in NC, and the first not following the passage of a hurricane. A tropical weather system originating from the Gulf of Mexico did pass over the Carolinas a week prior, 8 Jul, before becoming Tropical Storm Fay in the Atlantic, and was possibly related.

White-tailed Tropicbird 16 Jul 2020, in transit from Alamance Co, NC. Photo by Matt Wangerin.

Sooty Shearwater: 82 in flight off Cape Point *Dare* NC 2 Jun (Jonathan Heller) was a notable count.

Great Shearwater: 89 moribund birds were found along the Core Banks *Carteret* NC during a period of easterly winds 12-21 Jun (Jon Altman). Mortality events involving this species are fairly regular along the banks in summer. Multiple sightings were made from shore at scattered sites along the coast from late June through early July including a notable count of 35 at Cape Point *Dare* NC 9 Jul (Kate Sutherland).

Audubon's Shearwater: One photographed in flight off the east end of Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC 25 Jul (Pam Ford, Craig Watson) was notable from shore in SC.

Wood Stork: Sightings outside of the species' typical range included two to three along Lassiter Rd in *Wayne* NC 8-15 Jul (Eric Dean), an immature bird along Rich Gap Rd in *Macon* NC 14 Jul (Canty Worley), and an immature bird, possibly the same individual seen in *Macon*, near Brevard *Transylvania* NC 26 Jul (Frank Porter, Michael Plauché).

Magnificent Frigatebird: Ten reports of individuals were made this summer, likely some of the same individuals, at scattered sites along the coast from Nags Head *Dare* NC south to Daufuskie Island *Beaufort* SC.

Brown Booby: Pending review by the NC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent juvenile Brown Booby at Lake Norman *Mecklenburg* and *Iredell* NC 27-28 Jun (Phillip Covington, Jeff Lemons, David Schroder, Judy Walker, m. obs.). If accepted, the report would provide the second record of this species at an inland site in NC.

Anhinga: Anhingas were reported at sites as far inland as the northern end of Lake Norman *Catawba* NC 23 Jun (Monroe Pannell), at Cowan's Ford Wildlife Refuge *Mecklenburg* NC 14-20 Jul (Patty Masten, m. obs.), at Lake Conestee Nature Park *Greenville* SC 22-26 Jul (Michael Oliver, m. obs.), and at Dobbins Farm *Anderson* SC 27 Jul (Scott Davis).

American White Pelican: 12 in flight over I-85 in *Anderson* SC 23 Jun (James Flynn) and one in flight over Buckhorn Game Land *Orange* NC 12 Jul (Kent Fiala, Karen Hogan) were unusual for the Piedmont region in summer.

Brown Pelican: Individuals at Lake Hartwell *Oconee* and *Pickens* SC, a juvenile bird, 5 Jun (Kevin Kubach) and at Lake James *Burke* NC 27 Jul (Matt Eldridge) were unusual for sites away from the coast.

American Bittern: One photographed along a creek in western *Yancey* NC 30 Jun (Grant Buckner) was a first for that county and very unusual for the mountain region during the summer.

Great Blue Heron (white morph): "Great White Herons" were seen and photographed at Beaver Lake Bird Sanctuary *Buncombe* NC 9 Jun (Simon Thompson, m. obs.) and along the Watauga River northwest of Valle Crucis *Watauga* NC 8 Jun into August (Maxwell Ramey, m. obs.).

Tricolored Heron: Individual juveniles at Cane Creek Reservoir *Union* NC 17-23 Jul (Martina Nordstrand) and at Grogan Lake *Rockingham* NC 25 Jul though 3 Aug (Marty Wall, m. obs.) were good finds for sites in the Piedmont.

Reddish Egret, 15 Jun 2020, Mecklenburg Co, NC. Photo by Martina Nordstrand.

Reddish Egret: Pending review by the NC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent juvenile Reddish Egret at McAlpine Creek Park *Mecklenburg* NC 15-25 Jun (Peggy Sanders, m. obs.). If accepted, the report would provide the first official record of the species outside of the coastal plain in NC. 12 on Portsmouth Island *Carteret* NC 10 Jul (Daniel Irons) provided a new record high count for NC. Two white-morph

birds at that site 7 Jul (Jonathan Irons) were also notable.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron: A juvenile individual at Lake Julian *Buncombe* NC 30 Jul (John Koon, m. obs.) was unusual for the mountain region.

Roseate Spoonbill: Sightings made outside of the coastal plain involved immature individuals at Lake Hickory *Alexander* NC 15 Jun (Bob Lindsey, *fide* Dwayne Martin), at the upper end of Lake Norman *Catawba* NC 29 Jun (Caroline Martin), at Lake Edwin Johnson *Spartanburg* SC 4 Jul (Teresa Kopec), and at McAlpine Creek Park *Mecklenburg* NC 16-19 Jul (m. obs.). An immature bird in the Lake Landing area of Mattamuskeet NWR *Hyde* NC 28 Jun into August (Ricky Davis, m. obs.) was a first for that refuge. Four seen along the Waccamaw River in *Columbus* NC 20 Jul (Byron Levan) were a first for that county, possibly the same four birds seen in adjacent *Brunswick* NC on Oak Island 20 Jul (Katherine Bartlett) and along the Rivers Edge Nature Trail 23 Jul (David Wilson). Farthest north along the coast was one at the Rachel Carson Reserve *Carteret* NC 6 Jun (*fide* Paula Gillikin).

Swallow-tailed Kite: One over Irma's Produce Fields along Parker Padgett Rd in *McDowell* NC 11 Jul (Lori Owenby) was somewhat early for that traditional post-breeding gathering site. 12 over a field along Armenia Rd in *Chester* SC 15 Jul (Marvin Bouknight) was a notable count for that area.

Mississippi Kite: Nesting was confirmed in the Mordecai neighborhood just north of downtown Raleigh *Wake* NC when an adult was seen bringing food to a nestling 27 Jul (Jean Ells, John Connors). Nesting likely occurred in northwestern *McCormick* SC where two adults and three juveniles were seen together 1 Jun (Matthew Campbell) and in northwestern Winston-Salem *Forsyth* NC where up to five birds including a juvenile were seen together in mid-July (m. obs.). 24+ in southeastern *Moore* NC 20 Jun (Ann Robertson) was a notable count for that area.

Merlin: Three were seen, two appearing to beg for food from the third, near Land Harbor Lake *Avery* NC 1 Aug (Barbara Stewman) suggesting that a pair may have bred in that area this year.

Cassin's Kingbird: Pending review by the NC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent Cassin's Kingbird near the dam on Jordan Lake *Chatham* NC 30 Jun (Michelle Kent Forte). If accepted, the report would provide the first record of this western flycatcher in the Carolinas.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher: Breeding was confirmed near the Rock Hill-York County Airport *York* SC again this year when two adults were seen feeding three nestlings in early July (m. obs.). The nest near the intersection of Farm Camp Rd and Weber Rd in western *Cherokee* SC likely failed this year, as no juveniles were seen at the site and the adults were not seen after 20 Jun (Matt Malin). The pair seen along Thompson Creek Rd near Boiling Springs *Spartanburg* SC in May continued through 29 Jun (Steve Compton)

with one remaining through 9 Jul (Richard Hayes) though no nest was ever found at that site. An adult seen along Beaver Dam Church Rd in *Cleveland* NC 15-23 Jun (Tina Thomas, m. obs.) was without a mate. One photographed on Hilton Head Island *Beaufort* SC 30 Jun (Mary Blankenship) was unusual for a site along the coast during the summer.

Fork-tailed Flycatcher: Pending review by the NC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent Fork-tailed Flycatcher on the southern end of Ocracoke Island *Hyde* NC 29 Jun (Camron Robertson, Chelsea Weithman). If accepted, the report would provide the fourth record for NC.

Warbling Vireo: Three, including two singing males, in the Crabtree Creek Wetland *Wake* NC 20-30 Jun (Jin Bai, Harry LeGrand, m. obs.) was suggestive of attempted breeding at that site, though no evidence of nesting was found there.

Common Raven: One seen soaring over US-1 near Hoffman *Richmond* NC 8 Jun (Kyle Kittelberger) was extremely unusual for the Sandhills region.

Cliff Swallow: Active nest sites were found at four sites in *Carteret* NC this year, including 125 active nests under the NC-101 bridge over Core Creek 21 Jun (John Fussell, Steve Howell). Fussell notes that these numbers are "in strong contrast with a few years ago, when the species was virtually absent as a breeder in the county."

Winter Wren: 39 along the Wilson Boundary Trail between Stepps Gap and Balsam Gap *Yancey* NC 10 Jun (Simon Thompson, Marilyn Westphal) was a notable count.

Hermit Thrush: Nesting was confirmed along the Buncombe Horse Range Trail near Mount Mitchell *Yancey* NC when a female was seen on a nest 3 Jul (Chris Kelly). One recorded singing on Hooper Bald in the Nantahala National Forest *Graham* NC 13 Jun (Bill & Mary Kay Sullivan) was unusual for that area of the mountains.

Red Crossbill: Three at Caesars Head SP *Greenville* SC 30 Jun (Mike Resch, Michael Robertson) were notable for SC.

Pine Siskin: One photographed at a feeder in northern *Greenville* SC 29 Jun (Sue Erickson) was notable for SC in summer.

Lark Sparrow: Six in the Luzon Drop Zone *Scotland* NC 13 Jun (David Fischer) was a good count. The birds were paired up and likely breeding there.

White-throated Sparrow: One photographed at Waccamaw NWR *Horry* SC 2 Jun (John Hutchens) was late to depart.

Henslow's Sparrow: This species was only found at one site this summer, the Bear Grass Voice of America site in *Beaufort* NC, where 41 on 27 May (Alexander Worm) was the highest count.

Savannah Sparrow: Three singing males along Wilson Rd near Brevard *Transylvania* NC 9 Jun (Frank Porter, Michael Plauché, Martine Stolk) were suggestive of attempted breeding at that site.

Bobolink: Bobolinks likely attempted nesting at three sites in the NC mountains this summer—along Bamboo Rd in *Watauga* where eight were seen 6 Jun (Guy McGrane), along Island Ford Rd in *Transylvania* where 18 were seen 19 Jun (Nathaniel Axtell), and along Shawnee Rd in *Watauga* where six were seen 23 Jun (Steve Dowlan). Individuals photographed at Santee Coastal Reserve *Charleston* SC 12 Jul (Charles Donnelly) and in the Lake Landing area of Mattamuskeet NWR *Hyde* NC 16 Jul (Sally Siko) were early for sites in the coastal plain.

Baltimore Oriole: Outside of the mountains, breeding was confirmed along Buffalo Church Rd in *Cleveland* NC where a pair was seen tending to a nest 6-20 Jun (Bill Hooker) and at Tygerberry Landing *Spartanburg* SC where an adult male was seen feeding a juvenile 18 Jun (Neil Owens).

Magnolia Warbler: Breeding was confirmed along the Beacon Heights Overlook Trail *Avery* NC where a pair was seen feeding a fledgling 11 Jul (Will Johnson). Suggestive of attempted breeding were the one to five seen around Roan Mountain *Mitchell* NC throughout the summer (m. obs.).

Yellow-rumped Warbler: A male and a female at Richland Balsam *Haywood* NC 3 Jul (Vicky Burke) was suggestive of attempted nesting at that site.

Black-throated Green Warbler: Up to nine birds at South Mountains SP *Burke* NC throughout the summer (Brian O'Shea, m. obs.) and two singing males at Hanging Rock SP *Stokes* NC 2 Jun through 12 Jul (Jesse Anderson, m. obs.) were unusual for sites in the western Piedmont during the summer.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: An adult male photographed in a yard in southern *Horry* SC 18 Jun (Jordan Matejceck) was very unusual for a site outside of the mountains during the summer.

Dickcissel: Up to two singing males along Hurdle Mills Rd in northwestern *Orange* NC 1-26 Jun (Brian Bockhahn, m. obs.) and also along Pulley Town Rd in northeastern *Wake* NC 13-22 Jun (Marc Ribaudo, m. obs.) were new for those sites. The summer's high count was 12 at North River Preserve *Carteret* NC 14 Jun (Marty Wall, John Fussell, Steve Howell).

CAROLINA BIRD CLUB

www.carolinabirdclub.org

The Carolina Bird Club is a non-profit organization which represents and supports the birding community in the Carolinas through its official website, publications, meetings, workshops, trips, and partnerships, whose mission is

- To promote the observation, enjoyment, and study of birds.
- To provide opportunities for birders to become acquainted, and to share information and experience.
- To maintain well-documented records of birds in the Carolinas.
- To support the protection and conservation of birds and their habitats and foster an appreciation and respect of natural resources.
- To promote educational opportunities in bird and nature study.
- To support research on birds of the Carolinas and their habitats.

Membership is open to all persons interested in the conservation, natural history, and study of wildlife with particular emphasis on birds. Dues, contributions, and bequests to the Club may be deductible from state and federal income and estate taxes to the extent allowable. Pay dues or make donations at https://carolinabirdclub.org/dues. Make change of address at https://www.carolinabirdclub.org/members/profile. Send correspondence regarding membership matters to the Headquarters Secretary. Answers to questions about the club might be found at https://carolinabirdclub.org/about.html.

ANNUAL DUES

Individual or non-profit	$30.00
Family	$35.00
Student	$15.00
Sustaining and businesses	$30.00
Patron	$50.00 and up
Life Membership (payable in four consecutive $100 installments)	$500.00
Associate Life Membership (in same household as life member)	$100.00

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